



Remember 202 Hodgepodge

*...the completely
disorganized thoughts of an idiotic
scientist...*

by Dr. Joey Bone

Booklet five

Preface

Some say that bonafide creativity is a form of love, effortlessly and unavoidably thrust into the consciousness of the artist, like a brilliant tenacious neuronal-spasm. And if such is true, I can assure you that nothing remotely similar occurred in these scribbles; nor do these pages qualify as any form of ‘art.’ And although, I’d like to tell you this tangled-up disorganized hodgepodge is true, or at least that it’s based on some form of truth, sadly, this book is complete and utter fiction, nothing more. Please realize that this is a poorly written, unedited storybook, filled with boring redundancies, sidebars, and unrelated boring segues, so if you’re searching for a steady train of logical discourse, this is likely not going to be your cup of tea.

Make no mistake dear reader, not one phrase of this windy work, not a single piece of this scattered inky parlance is even slightly truthful. From cover to cover, this dusty slate is only pointless fiction... impure, and simple. If in reading this, you think you recognize anything, which corresponds to reality, be certain that it is purely coincidental, nothing more!

That's not to say that coincidence can't be useful or even quite remarkable. Most likely, life and all its events are coincidental, but there is a real chance that the human mind is only smart enough to spot the occasional coincidence, and so the mind considers it to be an infrequent special thing.

[OBJ]



LOVE

For some mystically pleasurable reason, I've always been drawn to women with darker skin tones. Though I'm too often wrong, when making emotionally based assumptions, it seems to me that if you enjoy a strong sexy women, you're more apt to find them with added pigment. Ergo, I find myself gazing at tall shapely: black, Latin, Greek, Italian, Brazilian, or even the darker southeast Asian women. For me, they're females, who seem more. For a female voice, I oftentimes prefer a calm black woman's voice, and not just for the richness of singing quality, but for other reasons as well, since a voice can sometimes say what words can't. But while I believe I'm adept at assessing feminine beauty, I must admit that I've made a lot of bad choices... females with aberrant behavior, probably due to my lack of awareness, whenever sex or beauty are involved. Maybe, my flawed mate selection process has something to do with the fact that I was a child alcoholic, perhaps not. You can be absolutely certain

about your motives and still be wrong.

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=8Qq2AV7Wx5w>

Usually, after I've been in a relationship for a year or two, I come to discover, that my female companion has some arcane self-destructive chemical addiction. I find that I'd wrongly assumed what was their own natural born exuberance, was in fact owing to some exogenous chemical, i.e., alcohol, cocaine, or amphetamine. Still, it seems to me that those addictive feminine personalities, while more troublesome, tend to be more lively and charismatic; hence, in certain respects those women are more desirable. In and of itself, addiction is certainly not an attractive pathology; in fact, it's ugly, but in my warped perspective, female addicts are often immensely more interesting.

The addict walks a tightrope all the way to death.

Why Live? by William A. Reyom

Why different people hook-up is routinely an infinitely convoluted conundrum, and for various unclear reasons, I am drawn to, and get along best with, women addicts, maybe not for the long haul, but for long enough, and then, it's time to move on. Unlike the movies, romantic love isn't usually made to last. As mentioned, even as a child, I was trying to escape boredom and frustration, via various forms of foolish behavior, not excluding the daily consumption of alcohol, beginning around the age of six months, until the miserable withdrawals at age twelve. Perhaps, my attraction to female addicts may be due to the fact that my childhood gray matter developed, while dealing with its own addiction, so perhaps I can better understand, and relate to addicts.

Unlike the military pilots of today, most of my Dad's squadron buddies and their girlfriends and wives were alcoholics, or at least big drinkers, and none of them seemed the least bit boring. How well I remember my parents coming home late at night, from being out at the Officer's Club, and my mother leaning over my bed to kiss me goodnight. Pretending to be asleep, I'd first feel the heat from her beautiful face, then smell her waning cologne,

mixed with her wonderful alcohol-laden breath. I truly enjoyed those things. I suppose that if as a child, your mom smelled like a garbage dump, you'd probably grow-up and never take-out the trash.

My daughter's mother is a tall lanky black gal, named Mary, who moves from place to place, from man to man. Each new man, is true love, until he isn't. Her moving around has a lot to do with: those failed relationships, her regular visits to rehabs, unpaid landlords, and with her need to avoid the law by moving to another state. She orbits between: Alabama, Texas, and New York. Nearly all her money finds its way into her damaged nasal membranes, and chronically inflamed bronchial tubes. Fortunately, I have the child, while Mary has her never-ending battle with cocaine. I'm seriously and permanently burned-out on dealing with Mary; if only my pity for her would do the same. Occasionally, she phones me, under the pretense of checking on Elizabeth, but the backstairs objective is only to finagle funds, usually disguised as: the cost of car repairs, past due rent, power bills, storage warehouse fees, a bus ticket, and then sometimes, she needs money to purchase commissary in county jail.

Honestly, I don't hate Mary at all, but I just can't stand her. Giving her the money isn't the problem, it's her overlooking the love of the child, and then there's the stench of her near constant unconvincing lies. Of course, that's exactly as her mother treated her. If you call Mary on her lies, she flies off the handle, trying to make you feel guilty for supposedly misjudging her, but I've got no guilt to give her. Now days, I only speak with her on the phone, unless it's to give her a ride to rehab. The conversation is always awkward and restrictive. By that, I mean I must avoid topics which are triggers. Triggers are anything that makes Mary want to use cocaine, and she has an absolute boatload of various triggers. For example, mentioning a restaurant, could be considered a trigger, if she'd once been high when eating there, mentioning anyone from her drug riddled past is a trigger, even discussing different movies or TV series can be triggers, various songs, certain neighborhoods, etc. If a person's addiction lasts long enough, the list of triggers may come to encircle the earth, and they may fire-off with nearly every memory in their brain's polluted hippocampi.

As a medical scientist, you look at most things in

terms of cause and effect, and you strive to answer questions, and create change for the good. If you're a religious leader, you look at everything in terms of your God, and tend to avoid questions and changes, which are not in line with your beliefs. If you're a politician, you tend to look at everything in terms of votes, money, and power, while seeking to disguise those motives. If you're a businessperson, you look at everything in terms of profit, often regardless of the associated damages. If you're a drug addict, you only love your drug.

Everyone's Motives are The Only True Motives

by M. Adrian Wolsey

Mary has smoked and snorted-up so much cocaine, and for so blessedly long, that it's a wonder that every aspect of Mobile aren't all triggers. And even if she had no triggers, I'm still done with her, simply because the cocaine seems to have killed off the kinder, more loving, parts of her brain, so all that's left of her mind are four overlapping things: her self-serving ego, her nonstop cravings, her self-destructive street smarts, and a huge set of manipulation skills, which still work on the people, whom she's recently meant.

While she enjoys raving-on about her triggers, what she really loves is cocaine, and as mentioned, her fallback emotion is anger, when she doesn't get it. If she falls off the wagon, it's only because someone has foolishly brought-up one of her addiction triggers. No fault ever lies with Mary. She only worries about addiction, when she can't get her cocaine. She'd love to blame the birth of her addiction on me, if it wasn't for the fact that it started long before I meant her. So instead, she blames it on her mom, her other family members, her former boy friends, etc. When Mary did the twelve step program, they told her that one of the things she needed to do was to apologize to everyone she'd wronged, as a result of her addiction. My daughter never received an apology, and next to Mary herself, my child was the one who has most clearly suffered from Mary's addiction. Also, I never received an apology, but I'm more than content to simply not hear from Mary, apology included. If you think that sounds cold, then you've probably never really intimately dealt with an addict for any appreciable amount of time. While addicts are filled with charisma and can be attractive, they can only be tolerated in limited doses.

For many years now, my daughter has refused to speak with her mother, largely due to the fact that Mary's main focus is on obtaining money for cocaine. Little compares to the damage sustained by a child, who has been rejected by their mother. For Mary, it's all a matter of the ever demanding exogenous chemistry. Though lately, Mary seems to be drug free, I'm certain, that sooner or later, I'll get a call, a text, or an email that she's back in another drug program, or in jail. Everything about her addiction is shrouded in a ridiculous veil of secrecy. For Mary, I believe that the secrecy of her addiction is one of its' appeals. By keeping their addiction cloaked in secrecy, the addict's addiction seems to maintain an air of holiness. Rare is the addict you openly discussed their addiction, with a non-addict. If you ask Mary if she's clean, she'll always say she is, until you find-out that she isn't. With most addicts, you can never be too sure how long their sobriety will last, and neither can they. Mary's addiction led her to all the usual complications: mental health issues, premature aging, poverty, jail, unemployment, family and social issues, a dramatic religious conversion (that lasted almost an entire year), etc. She hasn't gone to prison, yet. As stated, she acquired her addiction, years before I knew her, long before she

was pregnant with Elizabeth. While the addiction may in many respects be Mary's fault, the way the United States manages such things is even more ridiculous than how the addict manages to acquire and maintain their own addiction. Yes, addicts are a huge pain in the backside, but the manner in which the American legal and medical systems deal with addiction, makes the problem of addiction worse for everyone, especially the addicts and the taxpayers, and that a lot of people. Once a person is addicted, the response should only be a medical issue, not a legal one. The problem of hard drug addiction can be cheaply and quickly solved, almost over nite. (See Book 7, Chapter, Ending The Drug Problem).

Mary still insists that she was clean, throughout her pregnancy with Elizabeth. I'm unsure, but I'd like to think that it's indeed true, and that the monster didn't come creeping back to life, until later. Yes, there have been significant periods of time, where Mary remained clean. Now that I've somehow acquired a conscience, I sincerely feel sorry for her, but I don't feel a nanogram of love, just tons of useless pity. I'm barely smart enough not to express my pity for her to see. Nothing destroys a person quite as thoroughly as pity. It's almost as bad as

welfare. Too many capable people now look at their acquisition of welfare as a personal achievement.

When it comes to justifying their addiction, many female addicts have the acting skills of Meryl Streep, or when trying to obtain the necessary funds for the next high, or when explaining why they're still clean, when in fact they're not, or why it's not their fault that they started doing the drug in the first place, or why it's not really their fault that they recently fell off the wagon, etc. While I do believe, that addiction is something that should simply be forgiven, and without any attached legal punishment, the countless lies your average addict can generate will smell worse than the sewers in Aziziyah, Libya, on the hottest of summer days.

It's rare that an addict can unscramble their own splintered brain, for when it's all said and done, it's still a broken brain, trying to repair itself, an analogy might be a laptop with a blown hard drive, and faulty software trying to boot-up and repair itself. All those AA and NA meetings, where the participants get to relive their tragic drug-related experiences in front of a group of fellow addicts, are just pieces of broken gray matter stimulating other pieces of malfunctioning gray matter, trying to repair the drug

and/or alcohol induced damage to their gray mush. And if you think about it, what could be more of a trigger than those meetings, where all the chickens come to roost, and cluck about their triggers? In addition, they like make new drug connections. It's my unschooled opinion that for the vast majority of addicts, such programs are not just worthless, but too frequently tragically counterproductive. So many addicts will tell you that they owe their sobriety to AA or NA, but how do we know that those same people, wouldn't have succeeded on their own, nor do we honestly know that they remained clean. And, if those meetings were so effective, why is it that most of the attendees, regularly regress? NA meetings are also well known as drug hook-ups. Recently, an old friend of mine died of a drug overdose. The evening before he died, he came to talk with me in the gym, telling me that for the last few weeks he'd been using various addictive drugs, so I suggested he contact his NA sponsor. The next morning, my friend didn't wake-up. His funeral was attended largely by his fellow NA attendees. The addicts took turns standing-up and saying something good about the deceased, and as something of a pitiful summation to each of their brief statements, they said that they knew that my friend had died clean, even though

he'd died of an overdose. The attendees assumed that he'd purposely taken an overdose to comfortably end his life, for indeed he was an unhappy chap. They each wanted to believe that he was not again using. In other words, he didn't share his falling off the wagon, with his fellow addicts. Maybe that's why he was able to stay clean for fifteen years, but also why he died. Addiction is not rocket science, but simply reduced levels of brain dopamine.

Regardless of what every addict, psychologist, and psychiatrist might have you believe, addiction is a remarkably simple thing. It's nothing more than a low level of brain dopamine, a neurotransmitter, in various cells (neurons) of the brain (a couple of other types of neurotransmitter are also out of kilter). All the therapeutic counseling, mumbo-jumbo, group talks, and religious prayers, which ever existed won't fix that low brain dopamine. Yes, some addicts had extremely high levels of dopamine, to begin with, before they ever started using, so when they decide to stop using drugs/alcohol, they still have enough dopamine, that they don't crave the drug/alcohol, for it is the low level of brain dopamine, which makes the addict 'crave.' Again, craving is a feeling created, when the brain runs low on dopamine. Actually, it's

more than craving, but also things such as: melancholy, a lack of motivation, depression, purposelessness, misery, edgy, frustration, feelings of failure, etc. All those descriptors are all merely words attempting to describe certain less than optimal states of neurophysiology. Later, in these books is a discussion on how to elevate brain dopamine; ergo, how to fix, or get rid of, craving is presented (Book VII, in the chapter entitled, Ending The Drug Problem).

If you could somehow re-elevate the brain's dopamine, you'd more or less return the addict to 'normal,' roughly to the mental state they were in, before they'd first decided to abuse their illegal drug, but minus the brain cells which may have been killed by the years of abuse. Even though some brain cells have died, if you can elevate the levels of dopamine, in the dopaminergic neurons which are still alive, the craving may be greatly attenuated, perhaps even fully corrected. Consequently, it's better to quit sooner than later. There could have been some psychological factors, which initially caused the addict to use the drug or alcohol, but after years of abuse, the only thing keeping the addict addicted is the 'craving,' the low brain dopamine, not the initial

psychological issues.

To show you how clueless I can be, Mary and I'd been together for about three years, and throughout those years, I had no idea that she had ever been a cocaine addict. None! Any cocaine-induced exuberance I witnessed in her, I chalked-up to her natural physiology. One evening, we'd just gotten out of the shower and were sitting on the couch, watching a television documentary about cocaine in America, when she casually mentioned her addiction.

"I used to be addicted to cocaine." She quaintly commented, straight out of the blue, just as one might have said that they used to use a certain brand of coffee.

At first, I wasn't shocked, because I naturally assumed she was joking. While my past women had been drug and/or alcohol fiends, I hadn't been with any of them for three years, before finding out about their habit. The only exception to such drug use was my wife, but while she wasn't a bona fide addict, she did smoke marijuana to great excess.

"You don't actually mean you were addicted, Mary. You only mean that you just used cocaine a couple times. Right? Maybe, you went to a few

parties and tried it, but you weren't really a serious addict. Were you?" I skeptically questioned her.

"What would you call using cocaine, every day for four years straight?" She responded, as if it was no big deal, keeping her eyes affixed to the TV screen, and with no concern for having deceived me for three years running. *She's not joking!*

"Holy moly, sweetie! You sure took your blessed time letting me know about that minor detail of your life... four whole years you used cocaine, every day?" I asked in utter amazement. *How did I mis that!*

Mary just casually shrugged her shoulders, then humorously stuck-out her lower lip, as if she were a child pouting, because I'd unfairly scolded her, then she simply continued watching the TV. *How unobservant I've been!* To this day, I'm still shocked about how blind I've been to overlook a person, who could express such indifference about her protracted deceit. Shouldn't it be a requirement, that if you're an addict, that before you get serious with a person, you clue them in about your addiction? Oh, the secrets we keep... only a tiny percentage of mine are in these books. While I can generally spot the hidden motives, and evil natures, of most males, I'm nearly blind to the transgressions of females. Elizabeth's

biological father, is a blond haired blue-eyed fellow, who'd I'd later meet only briefly. My child cannot recall seeing her bio-dad, nor does she want to find him, and in all probability, that's just as well.

According to Mary, my daughter was the result of a crazy one night stand, with my child's blond-haired blue-eyed caucasian father. He was a rather serious pot smoker, who made and sold strings of colorful oven-baked clay beads at the *Mobile Flea Market*, and then for some reason, Mathew disappeared into the wilds of Northern Georgia, never to be heard from again, ergo never having anything to do with the actual raising of Elizabeth. I never relished the idea of sharing fatherhood with another man, especially one, who took no interest in her. My wonderful daughter is the best thing that could ever have happened to me, and in a very serious way, my life never really started, until she appeared.

Still, I have to hand it to Mathew, for according to Mary, he always mailed in his child support to the *Alabama State Child Welfare Office*. Mary, who received every dime of that child support, as well as the child's food stamps, kept it all to feed her ever hungry addiction, while I raised the child, and never received a dime of that support. But that's also fine,

for the same reason... I have that sublime loving child! Even the state took a percentage of the child's support, sort of like a handling fee, for when it comes to the government, they only operate effectively, when they can make money. Although, they'd no doubt vehemently dispute it, the child's welfare is actually a secondary issue.

It wasn't long after watching that cocaine documentary, that Mary and I broke-up, so the child became solely mine. Actually, it was Elizabeth who made the decision. She had developed more than sufficient distain for her mother. In so many ways, Elizabeth just forced the mother to realize what a bad mother she was. Foolishly, I used to insist that Elizabeth continue to periodically see her mother. Now, I'm certain I was wrong for doing that. This realization occurred one day, while I was working-out at the *YMCA*. I'd bumped into a child psychologist. She seemed quite pleasant and conversational, as we were pedaling away on our adjacent exercise bikes. After I told the psychologist that the child didn't want to see her mother, the psychologist asked me what good the mother was doing for the child. I literally couldn't come-up with anything, that Mary had done for the child. Then, the

psychologist inquired as to why was I insisting that Elizabeth see someone, who wasn't doing anything good for her (the child), and thus ended the mother daughter visits. As mentioned, Mary still calls, but I'm fairly sure the only genuine reason is to secure some cash, not out of love for Elizabeth. She probably has minimal sporadic pangs of guilt about the child, and is occasionally curious about how she's doing, but I doubt there's any significant love for Elizabeth, at least none which compares to her drug-induced cravings, her low levels of brain dopamine. Mary has made me realize how lucky I am to have been born to good parents.

Some biological relationships are obviously best ignored. It's just not good for a child's self-esteem to be habitually let down. There was consistently some contrived reason, that the child received nothing for Christmas or her birthday, when the real reason was being sold all over town, from various shady street corners, and rundown houses. Countless childhood dreams have vanished in those dilapidated drug houses. Simply wishing a child a happy birthday or a Merry Christmas is nice, but plainly wanting. If you're a parent, you've got to be on call 24-7, and you enjoy that demanding fact. Love supersedes

everything, and if it doesn't, then perhaps it's not love.

Albeit words do matter, they are cheap and easy, and when it's all said and done, it's what you actually do for a child, which vastly outweighs the casually spoken words of pretensive love. Things like: keeping them clean, healthy, and safe, taking them to school, getting them to the dentist and doctor, reading to them, entertaining them, encouraging and complimenting their various strivings, etc., are actual love. Moreover, my child's maternal grandmother, also a cocaine addict, has never given my child a single gift. In her case too, crack cocaine has always taken precedence over promises made.

"When Christmas gets here sweetie, I'm gonna buy you a..." Was always her lead-in to announcing every gift, which never came.

Of course, the young child gets a momentary thrill, thinking that they're actually going to make good on the gift, and therefore the child receives some wonderful, but ill-placed, appreciation. Later, the repetitious disappointment forces the child to ignore the lying relative. Oddly enough, neither my daughter's mother nor her grandmother can understand why she doesn't want to speak with

them. Such neglect is not the case for every crack addict, for I've meant a few, who were still able to give some of their ill-gotten monies to their kids, but such considerate addicts are rare. They also happen to be the ones, who usually don't try to hide their addiction from everyone, and are more prone to a successful recovery, having higher levels of brain dopamine.

As stated, Elizabeth, now a young adult, refuses to have anything to do with her mom, Mary, nor her grandma. In fact, she has nothing to do with the rest of her maternal family. Buried somewhere deep under all their addiction baggage, there probably had been some caring hearts. The grandmother claimed that her child, Mary, was the product of sex with her father, making Mary's father also her grandfather, and my child's grandfather also her great grandpa. Wonder how that looks on a hand-drawn family tree, one branch growing into a later and smaller branch. According to Mary, it was her own mother, who introduced her to crack! It was her own mother's boyfriend, Frederick, who had introduced Mary to sex, when she was eight years old, at least, according to Mary! The childhood molestation had not attenuated Mary's enjoyment of sex, quite the

opposite. One thing for sure, Mary was not sexually boring, and I never got tired of her, in that respect.

Had I completely stopped associating with Mary, Elizabeth's life would likely have crashed and burned; ergo, for years, I stayed the course, until that beautiful child could make her own choice to leave her mother and come live with me. By that time, Mary realized that the child was going to leave her. Perchance, Elizabeth was contemplating calling the state's department of *Children and Family Services*, and so Mary was finally forced to acquiesce to the child's wish to come stay with me. Mary knew what was in store for her, if the child called the state.

With very few exceptions, no matter how attractive or smart the female, after some period of time, I'm looking for a change. Sex with the same woman, month after month, or year after year, generally renders her less appealing in my odd mind.

It must be some genetic glitch in my gray matter, or a moral failing, or perhaps that's actually the norm for many males. Furthermore, monogamy for the male doesn't make evolutionary sense. The majority of males I've discussed this with, have said it's the same for them. On the other hand, crazy drug-addicted Mary, oddly remained something of a sexual

turn-on. Nevertheless, I just couldn't deal with the tons of addiction baggage, she brought along for the ride. A dozen centennial locomotives, hooked in tandem, would lose traction, trying to pull Mary's baggage. Addicts are a massive pain in the ass, but they can be oh so passionate! Some of my addict friends are truly brilliant creative people. The addiction baggage, sexual appeal, and brilliance seem to be part of life's tradeoffs.

After getting busted the first time, Mary was court ordered to be evaluated by a psychiatrist. His psychiatric evaluation correctly mentioned various things about Mary's personality. However, one of the most astute aspects of the report was when the shrink referred to her as being a 'master manipulator.' God, did Mary raise hell about that one small highly accurate psychiatric observation, solely because it was the most precise aspect of the evaluation, and she was afraid that when I saw that comment, that I might not continue to financially help her, that I would cease to be her enabler, that I'd stop succumbing to her unscrupulous manipulations. Pity is a bad reason to constantly help a person, it just makes them all the more pitiable. However, sticking around for the child was certainly worth it.

Mary always thought it was her sex, that she used to manipulate me, when in fact, the only two reasons I continued helping her was the child, and the near bottomless pity, I felt for her. I was never cruel enough to tell her that truth. Perhaps, I should have. The self-defeating manipulations were simply a sad testament to her struggles. Left to her own unaided devices, I was indeed afraid she'd die, so I periodically helped her.

She's one of those women who tends to over-rate everything about herself; perhaps such self-delusion helps to keep her going. We've now been apart for many years, but she still calls about once a month. Each time, she manages to include some combination of six things in the conversation: 1. Bogus concern about the child's wellbeing, to appear appropriate. 2. Some nebulous legitimate reason why she needs money, when the actual pressing need is money for drugs. 3. How much some guy currently desires her, hoping I'll confirm her desirability. 4. How someone has done her wrong and screwed her over, so I'll pity her, and be more apt to give her money. 5. Some physical ailment or injury, also to elicit pity, as an incentive for me to give her money. 6. A claim that she's been clean a long time, and does even care

about cocaine; again, so I'll be more prone to give her money for cocaine.

But, we all do what we need to do to keep going. Whatever works... In Mobile, the average cost for a 'rock,' (a cubic quarter inch of crack) is forty to fifty dollars. The last time Mary called me, she wanted to 'borrow' forty dollars. She didn't mention why she needed the money, since she was waiting for me to ask. Certainly, she'd already had a ginned-up semi-plausible reason, so I didn't bother to ask why she needed the money, and she didn't volunteer a reason. On a positive side, I didn't have to listen to her lie, and I saved forty dollars. She then knew I was finished with her.

In another case of where I had a long-time relationship with an addict, I was going with a Greek-American woman for about seven years. Her name was Marie, and she was a serious amphetamine addict. Again, I had no inkling about the addiction, at least not initially. About two years into the relationship, I accidentally found one of her pill stashes. She was going to five or six different doctors to get her 'weight-loss' pills, mostly benzedrine tablets and dexedrine capsules for the supposed 'weight loss.' She was just barely overweight. Addicts

could do such ‘doctor shopping’ back then, since the pharmacies didn’t share info.

Marie too was a master manipulator, and like Mary’s child, Elizabeth, Marie’s youngest female child no longer speaks with her. Children do so hate playing second fiddle to their parent’s favorite drug. It’s all a matter of pieces of gray matter getting stimulated by exogenous chemicals, and the children’s gray matter going without nurturing. It amazes me how such bad mothers can insist, that they love their children, when it’s so obvious they don’t, yet they seem to believe their own lie.

Above all, don’t lie to yourself. The man who lies to himself and listens to his own lie comes to a point that he cannot distinguish the truth within him, or around him, and so loses all respect for himself and for others. And having no respect he ceases to love.

The Brothers Karamazov by Fyodor Dostoevsky

Finding the amphetamine stash was a God send, in that it explained so much about Marie; in particular her insomnia and her periodic hallucinations. The she finally did sleep, it might be for fourteen hours.

I found the stash quite by accident.

Unintentionally, I'd caught my toe on the edge on a rug, stumbled, and bumped into her chest of drawers, and that's when I heard the pills rattling in their plastic bottle. It sounded sort of like the beans rattling in a Mexican maraca. Trying to locate the rattling sound, I first looked in each of the drawers, but couldn't find the source of the noise, so then I pulled one of the drawers completely out of the bureau frame. On the inside of the bureau's heavy wooden framing, a niche had been chiseled-out, where the clinking bottle of pills was wedged into the wooden nook. After further searching, I found that Marie also had additional bottles of amphetamines hidden in the back of her closet, inside the pockets of her winter coats, as well as in the attic under some insulation, under the kitchen sink beneath a small pile of cleaning rags, and behind the rusty cans of paint and cleaners in her tool shed. All I had to do was to pretend that I was looking for places to hide money. Most likely, I only found a few of her hiding places. The amphetamines were not quite as addicting as crack, nor as adderall, but nonetheless, they were highly addicting. Like their painkilling opiate-based narcotics, big Pharma now manufactures many times the actual amount of

adderall, which can be clinically/reasonably used! The drug companies fully realize that their overproduction of addicting drugs is creating countless addicts. Doctor-run 'pill mills' also have a lot to do with promoting addiction, and keeping big Pharma, in green.

While I have meant many and varied addicts: pill-poppers, alcoholics, heroin users, cocaine and meth smokers, etc, only a handful of times, have I meant a person, who was completely open and honest, about their drug habit. The first one I meant was a daily crack smoker, an older aunt of an x-girlfriend. How refreshing it was to hear her admit to the unadulterated truth about her addiction. My heart immediately went out to her, because of her admission, her rare rawboned honesty. Her name was Linda, and at the time that I meant her, she was in her fifties. She died a couple of years later, but she may have died with a clear conscious. Linda probably made it to heaven, even though she smoked crack. Some people might find it hard to believe that a drug addict could go to heaven, but there is often goodness in the most unexpected of persons.

“Yeah, I’ve been smoke’n those nasty rocks, for too many fuck’n years to count. Ain’t no telling how

many men I done messed with to get the money for a rock. Been in an out of all kinds of treatment programs, been locked-up in prison... nothing works, Joey. Try as I might, there ain't no get'n the crack monkey off my back. As soon as I'm out of the lock-up, I'm right back on the pipe... the same damn day. Got a list of regular guys willing to pay me for sex. I'm tired of lying about all this shit. You know, I'd be okay, if I could just get the rock, and not get in trouble with de law. You know... like you buy aspirin at the drugstore. Like things is now, I'll always be selling my ass, having sex with the dealers, and stealing shit from stores. I'll always be a criminal. Every damn day, I've got to do that shit, just to keep from going crazy. Without crack, I'm never right in the head, and my life's not worth living. It's a good thing I'm not braver, or I'd killed myself."

"Talk'n with some court ordered councilors, or cops never makes any difference. You could put me in jail for ten years, and when I'd get out, I'd still go look'n for rock, as soon as I get free. I'm a crack junkie for life, and there ain't no changing that. I done tried to quit too many times to not know that's I'm fucked for life. Without it, I feels so bad that I

might as well be dead. If you ain't know addict, you can't know what I'm talk'n about." Sadly, Linda made these confessions, periodically glancing at me to see how I was receiving them, and she never asked me for money or hinted at sex. She was the rarest of addicts, indeed.

She was one of those females, who used the gun for suicide; even so, if there's a heaven, I think Linda's there. Most addicts go for some kind of overdose. Yes, I know what the old testament says about suicide, but the old testament puts every gay person squarely in hell, and various passages in the old scripture even condone the use of slavery, so that begs the question, 'just how good can the old testament honestly be?' Had Linda just been given her drug each day, she wouldn't have had to live as a sexual slave to every Tom, Dick, Harry, or dealer, nor would she have had to steal! Crack is dirt cheap to make, since pure lab manufactured (without the coca plant) cocaine cost practically nothing to synthesize, so why not just give it to the addicts. Let's face it, the cartels would quickly go belly-up, along with their various dealers. Over ninety-eight percent of the illegal cocaine in America is used by addicts. Sure there are the casual users, but their drug

consumption (< 2%) pales in comparison to the amount of that drug used by the millions of addicts.

If you're considering starting a romantic relationship, and want to know if your amorous acquaintance has dealt drugs, or is a drug addict, just opt for uttering a tiny lie. Start talking about your own fictitious drug dealing, or your own spurious drug habit. If done in a sincere matter-of-fact manner, that technique usually starts your prospective lover, describing their own dealing or addiction, if indeed they're guilty of such. Of course, you also run the risk of alienating them, if their not guilty of such doings, so you might want to send a letter of explanation, due to arrive the following day, which explains your true motive. Another effective tactic, which you might consider is simply mentioning, that you attend NA or AA meetings, in a nearby town, so as to not run into anyone you know. Still, the lie might be worth considering, since it may save you trouble, sparing you a miserable problematic romantic connection, with an addict.

I've appreciated black beauties, long before they became fashionable, even when everyone I thought that a black woman could never possibly compete for Miss America. I must admit, I was pleasantly

shocked, when in 1970, Cheryl Brown, Miss Iowa, actually competed in the contest, but it was not until 1983, that Vanessa Williams won the event, shocking the deep South, ergo many of Mobile's rednecks went totally ape-shit. Prior to the above dates, perhaps black women just weren't glamorous enough. But more likely, there was a weird racist mindset about blacks not being beautiful.

The first black woman I fell for hard, like I'd fallen off the top of the Burj Khalifa in Dubai, and landed smack-down face-first on the concrete sidewalk. Evangeline was a highly energetic long shapely buttery brown girl. It was early one snowy evening. I'd gone into Georgetown in the district, and ran into her, when I was only a few feet from entering a club called, *The Crazy Mule Saloon*. Evangeline was just coming out, and we literally bumped into each other. We were both a little stoned.

She had extra large wide spaced intelligent smiling eyes with naturally dark reddish brown upper eyelids. To say the very least, her beauty was breathtaking... a face which could certainly launch thousands of desires, while the rest of her inimitable self was better yet. It seems to me, that generally

black women do have better bodies. Oh sure, there are some white women with great bodies, and a certain percentage of black females have bad shapes, but by-in-large, they seemed to be better formed. It's not just the muscles, but perchance it's how the superficial fascia, just beneath the skin, seems to hold things so wonderfully in place, beautifully curved things, which may appear to defy gravity: the shape and tone of the legs and arms, the lift of the butt and the breasts.

Momentarily, while standing in front of Evangeline, gazing at her staggering beauty, I felt completely out of my league, but somehow that fact just increased my desire. Although I was temporarily mesmerized, I was barely conscious enough to make a run at her. After bumping into her, we stopped, and she had snared my gaze with those large molten eyes, all the while small white snow flakes drifted and swirled in the air between us. For a few seconds, I felt a powerful urge to tell her I loved her, because I did and I still do. She was a tall slim black woman with something which many black women would kill for... extremely thick, long, wavy, all natural hair. She wore it in a single ultra wide thick braid. The braid started near the middle of her forehead, and

departed from the back of her head and the base of her neck, ending in her lumbar curve. The beautiful braid was thick enough for three women, and possessed a fuzzy silky surface. There was no hair-weave then, as so many black women now employ. Everything about Evangeline riveted me. There was this overriding need to touch her braid and to kiss her mouth, but due to social custom, I only politely smiled; but then, I kissed her anyway, while gently placing my hand behind her long curved neck, cupping the soft heavy braid. My need was near bottomless, and I sensed she was waiting for me to make a move. After the kiss, she smiled even more broadly. Oddly, Evangeline, a black girl, was dressed like a 60s hippie, with the tie-dyed blouse and billowing light cotton skirt, though it was cold and 1970 at the time. After the kiss, true romantic love had finally arrived. It would be the last time for me!

“You have got to be the sexiest thing, I’ve ever bumped into. You may be far too attractive for a guy like me, and I’m not sure how you feel about white guys, but I’d like the opportunity to show you around Georgetown, tonight, and maybe more. What do you say, pretty baby? Would you, do me the honor?” I cajoled.

Suspended in time, I anxiously awaited her reply, but she was in no rush. Her delay was deliberate. Sometimes it's best to know when to slow down and savor the moment. On an alcohol-weed buzz, she slowly stepped in closer, and hypnotically let a wondrous smile gradually expand across her magnificently sculptured face, as she studied my eyes. Her radiant smile made her cheekbones pop and included the outer corners of her immensely erotic eyes. Instantly, I felt her, and she knew it. In those few seconds, I fully realized that she was indeed the one for me, when I thought such a thing was mere myth, something dreamed-up by countless corny Hollywood screen writers to sell movie tickets to starry-eyed teenage girls... the world's biggest dreamers... bless them all.

“Sure! Show me around, young white man. What should I call you?” She asked, then she laughed, and her cheek and eyes exploded.

From the jump, I loved her voice. *She's got to be a great singer.* Yet, there was a certain tightness to its tenor, accurately promising of something good to come.

“You can call me yours' sweetheart, but my name is Joey. And what should I call you?” My cornball

reply escaped my mouth, before I realized it was so hackneyed, and so I laughed.

“Well, my man Joey, I feel like I’ve been looking for you all my life. Call me Evangeline, your black queen, at least for tonight.” She stated in lilting manner, while smiling and leaning forward. *I want to kiss her, again!*

“And, I feel like I’ve been looking for you, since the dawn of time, sweet Baby.” I declared, as I kissed her, again, yet a bit slower and longer, gently sucking and pulling on her firm full lips.

My comment had been delivered, without the usual corresponding smile, and probably with too much sincerity for having just meant her, but I definitely met it, and she knew it to be true! It was the rarest of moments, a brief instant of unexpected sincerity. You might be thinking that it was just the weed and booze talking, but there’s little doubt that it was my heart professing its’ desire. Looking into her eyes, I didn’t feel the slightest need for social pretense. She owned my heart, from the beginning. How lucky I was to meet her! How well I realize that very few people get to experience such a moment.

While my words were not exactly classy, their

stark honesty did the trick. At least, something did the trick, for she continued to hold my gaze, and returned my kiss. In the chilly winter air, she felt so warm, smooth, and timeless. I inhaled her whiskey breath, and her heady perfume, mixed with the all too familiar aroma of weed from her hair and clothes.

That encounter was every bit as exciting as when I first meant Anna in the hallway of the shooting club, in Spain, but without the awkwardness I experienced as a twelve year old boy. This time, it was love the way it was meant to be, not a kid being hustled by a prostitute. Meeting Evangeline was direct, open and honest, and filled with anticipation. The young woman possessed a good spirit, so the attraction was more than just sexual. Such a situation takes hold of you, like a giant warm friendly ocean wave, only you can breath while under its' power... no sharp rocks, no razor-edged coral reef, but they were there, I just didn't see them, then.

After a couple of days, we'd gotten to know each other. As time passed, we'd go to the least populated clubs, find the darkest corners, or we'd periodically use an empty bathroom stall. We both still lived at home and didn't have much money, and couldn't

afford to rent a room too frequently. When we kissed, our lips and tongues seemed to have their own thoughts. She brought sweetness into my mouth, and warmth into my heart. Making love with Evangeline would generate blooms of heat and rivulets of sweat, which happily ran down the skin of our smooth young bodies. Before her, I'd only known carefree sex.

Often, in those unlit corners of the clubs, we'd just unzip and loosen our clothes, pulling them out of the way. She'd sit in my lap and I'd get lost in heaven, passed her intoxicating wet curls. There in the club surrounded by humanity, we'd be fucking without much movement and without the burden of time; instead, happily caught-up in the rhythm of the club's music. Though he hadn't written it yet, the circumstance was somewhat like Dylan's *Blood on the Tracks* album, but I didn't know about the simple twist of fate about to eclipse my happiness.

I've seen love go by my door

It's never been this close before

Never been so easy or so slow.

Been shooting in the dark too long

When something's not right it's wrong
Yer gonna make me lonesome when you go
Dragon clouds so high above
I've only known careless love,
It's always hit me below.
This time around it's more correct
Right on target, so direct,
Yer gonna make me lonesome when you go...

from Bob Dylan's song,

*You're Gonna Make Me
When You Go*

Lonesome

Generally, no one seemed to notice, but at times we were so high and involved with each other, we didn't honestly care about other people, and occasionally Evangeline was so vocal that a deaf man outside on the sidewalk would have heard her. Some parts of her song was inevitably timed with the music, or maybe it was the other way around. Either way, it was so dark inside the club, that people just routinely figured that she was really into the music.

Sex does have a way of mating-up with the music, most especially, when stoned on weed. No one seemed to mind. Just once, a waiter asked us to please leave, but he was smiling, and obviously not the slightest bit upset. John Lee Hooker was singing that night and likely didn't need her competition... Boom Boom.

In the months that followed, my loneliness quickened, whenever I wasn't with her, and my love swelled, whenever I was. Evangeline took me to heaven, only to later deliver me through the back door of hell. But even now, I wouldn't have missed the experience, not for the answers to all the mysteries of the universe.

Love will make a man run the razor's edge.

The Younger Years by M.A. Rowley

Perchance, if there is a heaven or a hell, she and I may again be together, yet intuition (faith) tells me, that those places don't honestly exist. Lord knows the bible does a poor job of describing paradise, in fact, every religious text only provides a vague description. However, the holy books do a great job

of making one fearful of hell. In fact, if I recall my bible lessons, the book contains much more about hell, than it details heaven... more of the whip, and less of the carrot... more cruelty, less love. Is that wisdom at work, or a cruel God? Wonder if that says something about the bible? Is it really better to be scared into heaven? Right? Perhaps, if the bible is actually the word of the Lord, then it says something about the nature of humans... anything to make the bible appear wise. Every holy book is filled with enough wisdom that those portions offset its' short comings. With enough complexity, and with dozens of people saying nearly the same thing, you can generally baffle even the brightest of minds, especially if it fears burning. Doesn't it seem a little ridiculous, that the creator of the entire universe, would want to so mercilessly torture souls?

Hell is empty and all the devils are here.

William Shakespeare

Evangeline's father worked for the *State Department*. She said he was a spy, who claimed he was an advisor, and sometimes an analyst. It's funny how people can fall for titles. Most of his assignments

were in countries of Africa and South America. Every time I saw him, he was in a suit and in a hurry, probably doing his part to save our nation, as well as to earn a good living. The man was overly polite with everyone, but glowered at me when he spoke, and could be more than a little testy, since he no doubt spotted my demons, and while Evangeline's demons were more fearsome than mine, predictably, he remained blind to hers. His new wife was a real humdinger, and she nearly bankrupt him. She'd insisted that she was a savvy business woman, and had once talked the man into financially backing her for starting a woman's store: handbags, clothes, shoes, scarves, etc., in an expensive area of Alexandria, Virginia. After three years, and way too much lost money, her store folded, and Evangeline's dad had to pay-off all the debts she had accrued. He felt obligated to pay, since the *State Department* frowned on anyone filing bankruptcy.

What also chapped his wide black butt was that I lacked ambition. Though I was then twenty years old, the four years of post alcohol withdrawal depression, from roughly age twelve to sixteen, had erased any desire I had for conventional success. Back then, I happily told him that I had no interest in

becoming anything special, that I just wanted to date his daughter, work an everyday job, read a few good books, see a few good movies, have a few friends, and aspire to be nothing of consequence. So many wasted years... I waited far too long to become 'properly' motivated. While apology and expiation can rectify various wrongs, it can never recover lost time. Is there anything which doesn't cost time, or in some way, shorten our time?

Time and love are the only currencies in the marketplace of life.

W.A. Morey, Ph.D.

According to Evangeline, her biological mother was a beautiful 'whitish' Italian alcoholic, who had died, when Evangeline was in the first month of the sixth grade... metastatic kidney cancer, which had traveled to her lungs and brain. Her father later remarried, and Evangeline's sexy new young step mother, who was only seven years Evangeline's senior, habitually stayed away from the family's beautiful old Southern styled home, built on the edge of Falls Church, just outside the Northwest corner of

the District. The stepmother's frequent absences were ostensibly owing to shopping expeditions. I lived in Fairfax County, a few miles southwest of the District. Once I saw her glamorous step mom, during one of her supposed shopping odysseys, coming out of a motel, with a tall white gentleman, roughly her own age, and oddly enough, they didn't have any shopping bags with them. Like I said, she was a humdinger. The man got into his fairly rusty green 1964 Ford Falcon and she got into her shiny 1967 new silver Mercedes 300 SE, paid for by the spy. Of course, I never mentioned that to Evangeline, nor to her dad, for what would be the point?

Sex at Evangeline's place was whenever her dad was out of town, typically somewhere overseas, and her stepmom was out 'shopping,' with her 'friends.' Evangeline's light-skinned stepmom was way too good-looking for Evangeline's older overweight dad, but certainly not for his money. Many people feel that when it comes to honesty in relationships, women are the most honest, but that may depend on how you look at it. Granted, I do believe that men are more apt to cheat and break the seventh commandment, than are most women. However, when looking at the couples relationships as a whole,

I think that generally men are the most honest. The reason I say this is when it comes down to matrimonial motive, the average heterosexual female principally marries for two reasons: great sex, and/or lots of money. The better the sex, and/or the larger the man's bank account, the better a prospect he becomes.

The great sex certainly satisfies the primal need for sperm and the woman's DNA demand for offspring; besides, it's fun and it feels terrific. The money is probably part of the woman's nesting instinct, since a man with more money can better provide for the care of the prospective offspring; he can better 'feather the nest.' So for most women, both the great sex and the money are likely quite literally hard-wired into their pair of X-chromosomes, since those two qualities better insure a viable offspring. If asked to choose between two different men, and one is truly rich, and the other is gifted in the sack, more often than not, the woman will choose the money. Likewise if a woman is asked to choose between the man who is rich and the one of great moral rectitude, again she'll usually select the man with the money. Some of the exceptions to this are the wealthy woman, or the woman with an

established successful career. The X-chromosome is about ten times bigger (more info, more genes), than is the Y chromosome. Consequently, when it comes to sex, women are obviously more apt to be more complicated. Correspondingly, women have a greater investment in the care of the offspring. In my humble opinion, few are the females, who understand the above, or if they do, few are willing to admit it; nevertheless, once it's explained to them, they rarely deny it.

When a man marries, he is more prone to select a good and caring woman, one who possesses honesty and integrity, so unlike the female, he doesn't primarily marry for great sex or money. More virtuous qualities, better insure that she will make a good mother. Here again, the offspring are the important variables. The male is neurologically wired to seek-out those mothering traits in the woman he desires to marry. Moreover, the male's greater likelihood of infidelity, also increases the probability of offspring. In these respects, the male and the female are truly the opposite sides of the same coin. Whenever I've inquired of my male friends, with whom they had their absolute best sex, never have they named their wife... not once! Generally, the guy

says something to the contrary.

“My wife isn’t the best in bed, but that gal who was the best in the sac, was too much of a wild bitch. I’d never think about marrying someone like her. The richest woman I knew was okay, but she was a bit into herself; certainly, not someone I’d want to marry, either. She was selfish, too self-centered. Fun to fuck, but certainly no one to marry.”

When a man marries, it’s more apt to be for a deep adoration and affection, derived from what he perceives as her innate goodness, integrity, and sincerity. This begs the question, when it comes to relationships, who is the most honest, the cheating men, or the women, who marry for sex and money? Bare-in-mind that in the average male brain, sex and love are not so well connected. Literally, the *Septal Nucleus* where sex is realized is not well connected with other emotional portions of the male’s limbic brain. While sex and love are found in relationships, these two variables are not so much connected in the male; in other words, having sex doesn’t make the male feel love. Females often can’t agree with that, simply because they have different wiring diagrams in their gray matter. In the males, its sort of like hot chocolate (sex) and Lima beans (love) are both found

in the grocery store (the guys brain), but aren't even on the same isle, and don't taste remotely similar (no connection). Admittedly, that's not a great analogy, but perhaps it makes the point.

Consequently, when a man cheats on his wife, he can't possibly perceive it has an indication that he doesn't love her. It's sort of like going out to a new restaurant, but without bringing the wife along. Nevertheless, the wife can't help but perceive her husband's cheating as his not loving her, because that's how a heterosexual woman is neurologically wired... the sexual parts of her brain are better connected to the emotional parts of her brain comprising what she thinks of as being love, hence sex is destined to be equated with love in her mind. As a result, if the husband cheats, it's a sure sign that he's fallen out of love with her. But in the male's version of reality, cheating is not such a big deal. While that's not always true, it is the majority of the time.

Women also tend to believe that the husband thinks they are the best in bed, whereas men like to believe that the wife selected him because of his honesty and integrity, or at least that she feels that he's capable of those qualities. He would also like to

think he is the best in bed, but probably isn't, especially if he's got lots of money. While this hypothesis is certainly not universally true, and there are undoubtedly exceptions, it's by-in-large on the mark. However, there are a small percentage of guys, who marry, because they get into a relationship, get sick of it, but can't figure-out how to leave, without causing all parties emotional trauma. That happened to a few of my friends.

So, who's more honest in relationships, men or women? And, don't forget the male is often neurologically hard-wired, to mate with many women, and to not be faithful to just one woman. He's literally DNA blueprinted to be unfaithful, thereby increasing his number of kids, bearing his nucleotide sequences. If you believe in the wisdom of mother nature, then you've got to respect this common form of male sexual wiring, as well as the woman's. A male's DNA doesn't care about fidelity, and the woman's is less interested in moral motives for mate selection. Perhaps, the male is raised to believe in fidelity, but his DNA-induced neural wiring doesn't believe in fidelity. It only cares about continuing the nucleotides sequences into the future. A self perpetuating mindless, collection of selfish

molecules, the various unique arrangements of four bases: adenosine, guanine, cytosine, and thymine. Only the order of those four bases form our distinctive blueprint, a simple, but extremely lengthy, quaternary code.

In addition, at least in the natural world, the male generally doesn't have the long-term investment of caring for the child, and he's generally not psychophysiologicaly bonded to the child, as much as is the mother (See book seven, Chapter entitled, La Juartas). Nor does he carry the fetus for nine months, or undergo a painful and often extremely dangerous, if not deadly, birthing process. Furthermore, he doesn't form a powerful oxytocin-based parental bond. The father-child bond is slightly neuroendocrine, but is more based on empathy and a love for kids, in general. These male and female genetic-behavioral traits were not installed in the human genome to make our life's moral struggles more challenging, but because of societal/religious norms, they may.

Having said these things about the male sexual nature, I must admit that I'm truly grateful that my dear Dad was at least an apparently faithful husband, and actively worked to better insure the quality of

my mother's life... as well as, mine. Still, it's certainly in all our natures to be foolish, when it comes to sex. On the one side of the human coin, you have women, who marry for sex and money, and expect their husbands to be only hot for them, and are in oxytocin-love because of the sex and offspring he's given her; then on the other side of the coin, you have men, who have married for the right reasons, but want to screw lots of women, because their brain demands they do so. When it comes to love and sex there are those generalities, but there are no absolutes, for every brain is different. Whether genetically based or otherwise, I was probably meant to spend my life with Evangeline for all the right and the wrong reasons.

Oddly, Evangeline wasn't a full fledged addict, although we did a fair amount of drinking and weed smoking, so perchance, she was borderline. Or, maybe she was an addict, but I didn't know her long enough to fully realize that. For whatever reasons, she had me wrapped around her little finger and committed for the long haul. I loved her in all of her alluring forms. Our only future plans were to enjoy each other, as much as possible, so each time we were together, we simply lived for the moment.

Late one night, we were both pretty hammered and having sex outdoors, down in a shallow grassy depression, smack-dab on Georgetown's campus, when something surreal occurred. This may sound a little strange, but it's true. We were in the standard missionary position, belly to belly, when unexpectedly her back became my stomach and my back became her stomach. I was on top, hence her back was on the grass, yet I felt the grass, on my belly. In effect, we both had become one body. The following is not anything dramatically arousing or erotic *per se*, but it was more like magical sex. It was long ago, yet I still recalled that it seemed so real, at the time. While sex is always unusual when stoned, that night was beyond unusual. Perhaps, part of this event may be owing to the fact that when one cannot legally grow their own weed, they cannot be certain about what it's been treated with. Evangeline and I became as one person... one complete person. I suppose you could say it was a type of somatosensory hallucination, or that it was a spiritual union. But, call it what you will, it was undeniable. Forty plus years later, I still occasionally ache for her!

When the truth is found to be lies

And all the joy within you dies

Don't you want somebody to love?

Don't you need somebody to love?

Wouldn't you love somebody to love?

You'd better find somebody to love

Love

When the garden flowers

Baby, are dead, yes

And your mind, your mind is so full of red...

Somebody to Love (originally by The
Great Society, and sung by Jefferson Airplane)

Evangeline was an angel, who loved her dad and hated her greedy sexy stepmom. Evangeline was an only child, and the epitome of goodness, beauty, energy, and brilliance, and she could read me in a flash. It seemed as if she always knew just what to say or do. My second and third most favorite things were to see her smile and hear her laughter, so I ginned-up everything imaginable to make that lovely smile shine forth, and evoke her lyrical laughter. She was majoring in political science at *George*

Washington University, and the school work was a snap for her... no need to study, but she needed to make straight A's to get into *Georgetown Law*. Her dad was all about Evangeline getting into that law school... best laid plans. He was from New Jersey and had graduated from *Princeton Law*, whence he'd probably decided that Evangeline was destined for the world of law, whereas I was soon destined for the world of the lawless. After Evangeline, for the next ten to fifteen years, I operated largely on the other side of the law.

How many books, movies, plays, etc., have iterated the idea that for every person, there is that one true soul-mate? I always thought that was an illogical, if not a delusional idea, and that it could only exist in the minds of young dreamers. In a way, I still think that way, only because it seems so unlikely. How could you possibly find that special person, if there's really only one person for you on the entire big blue marble? However, considering the complexities of the subconscious mind, finding your one and only, may be something of a snap... the computational power of ten billion neurons, each with roughly five hundred connections (synapses), is more than the conscious ego can gauge, roughly five

trillion connections (I think that's 5 terabytes?), but then there's all the pathways, which can be created involving various numbers of those five trillion connections; as a result, the computational power is indeed nothing short of amazing. On the other hand, there's a good chance that top-secret advances in AI have surpassed the human brain, at least for cognition. The *Rybka* chess engine, won the *World Computer Chess Championships (WCCC)* from 2007 to 2010, but was stripped of those titles, after the *International Computer Games Association* claimed that *Rybka* had plagiarized from *Crafty* and *Fruit* chess engines.

While the concept of there being only one true love may seem unfeasible, if not ridiculous, I think in some rare cases, it might actually be true... most cases far from it. This one and only thing would also mean that if your one and only died, there's no hope for such love, again. But, if there were only one person for you, how would you ever hope to find that person, with roughly seven billion people, spread-out over the surface of the planet? What if you lived in the mountains of northern California and your one true love was over in a remote suburb of Tangiers, or in a stone hut in the countryside of Tierra del Fuego?

Then, what would be the odds of that one perfect hook-up? The odds seem insurmountable of finding that one person... the human version of the needle in the haystack. Nonetheless, the means by which this might be accomplished could actually be remarkably simple. One such method is that the brains of the two people actually are configured so as to make said perfect match happen, even without them being consciously aware that they're arranging it. Another might be as follows.

This idea of the one-and-onlys being able to find each other begins with the fact that the ego, the conscious brain, represents but a tiny fraction of the brain. With most folks, the conscious goings-on is carried-out by less than two percent of the gray mush. Perhaps, it is this two percent which is assessed by IQ tests. For people like Hillary and Trump, it seems to me that their conscious chunks probably occupy a greater portion of their gray matter, hence there may be less gray matter to devote to creativity designed not for their ego but for the betterment of humankind, ergo what they do create is more apt to be self-aggrandizing. Still, for many folks, the much larger unconscious regions of the brain might be able to sort through massive

amounts of data, which the ego is incapable of processing, or even being aware of. Perhaps, it is this 'larger subconscious computer,' which seeks-out, and finds a way to allow us to meet our one and only, our supposed soulmate. By the same token, the other of the mated pair is also looking. In that way, and perhaps many other ways, the two subconscious minds may be like thousands of Sherlock Holmes working together, and not just to find the 'one and only,' but to be confronted by, or in some way involved with, various other things, perchance plotting-out our life's countless destinies. Ever notice how much people like to ask couples how they meant? To my way of thinking, the subconscious is likely the most dynamic creative force we possess, and yet compared to the complexity of the universe, it maybe of little consequence.

To the largely blind ego, the massive computations of the brain, remain mostly hidden. Why else would it be called the subconscious? Due to the fact that the ego possesses fewer neurons, and remains concerned only with its self-serving interests, the larger portion of the brain forever remains a mystery. This is to say, that such a huge processing lump of gray matter may seem mystical or even

ridiculous to the ego. Nevertheless, the small highly limited ego thinks that the discovery of his or her one-and-only, happened by accident, or by happy coincidence; that is, if said person is actually the supposed one-and-only, which down the road, they rarely are, yet occasionally they are.

It's already occurring, in minor ways, but perhaps one day, computers will takeover the task of mate selection. It'll may be better at finding that one and only, than our subconscious minds. The computer's analysis may not only be based on physical and psych-testing, but on a series of biochemical parameters, and not just the pheromones and their concentrations. The computer matching may include huge amounts of biomedical info: subtle aspects of endocrine factors, genes will be sequenced, various gross anatomical parameters, aspects brain evoke potentials, brain MRI features, psych profile scales, hormone measures, life experiences, etc. Maybe, you'll go to a dating service and electrodes will be attached to your skull, there'll be hours of psych testing, blood and urine samples will be taken, etc. Critical questions will be asked and a voice-stress analyzer will evaluate response validity, and then your data will be compared to the data of all the

earth's inhabitants... bingo! ... you'll be introduced to your one-and-only soulmate, or at least get their cellphone number, and maybe a photo. The section may not only be designed to best insure the happiness of the couple, but also things like the fitness of the offspring, the wellbeing of humankind, the survival of the earth's atmosphere, etc. I've got to admit, that is beginning to sound a bit like The Third Reich, so maybe we should just stick with the good old fashioned subconscious.

However for me, it actually happened, without the aforementioned modern-day computer search and psychophysiological analysis. Evangeline was mine, and I was hers... we were ours. Everything was so easy and immediate, and at least I got to be with her for a little while, and maybe that's more than I deserved. When it's all said and done, that's all anyone gets... a little while. Like Mary, my child's mom, and Marie, the amphetamine addict, I never got tired of Evangeline's sex, and I never got tired of listening to her singing along with the songs on the car radio. In every case, her voice was finer, richer, than the actual artist, and lifted my spirits. For me, the nature of a person's voice has a terrific effect. In any given situation Evangeline saw some amount of

humor in it. If someone said something, where others would simply contemplate the words, she would begin to laugh because she'd found the nugget of humor or irony. Unlike Mary and Marie, I loved Evangeline. Mary and Marie will always have my pointless pity, but nothing more. Honestly, sometimes I think that they really believe that pity is preferable to love, and I understand what that may say about me. Evangeline's eyes were enough to give a dead man hope, and her body could make a dead man dig himself back-up, through six feet of dirt... face of an angel and the body of a she-devil.

At that time, I was just attending a community college, but only because my parents wanted me to succeed, whereas good times were all I was interested in... certainly not any significant academic achievement. I ha no intellectual interests. Then, I never bought into the concept of becoming a success, or wanting to heal the sick, or right various legal wrongs, or save the world from huge corporations. I just wanted to experience whatever came my way. The boredom of the work-a-day world scared me senseless. Perhaps, that was partially owing to having watched my Dad, work himself into oblivion. Dad died at ninety-two, but was built to last much longer,

but he worked so hard helping to defend the United States of America, that he quite literally burned himself out.

After enduring my four years of post alcohol-withdrawal depression, life hardly seemed worth the living, much less to put forth the effort to try for something meaningful, or for some socially acceptable form of success. I was just hoping for a bit of normalcy or at best a glimmer of happiness, and the hell with even dreaming of success. As obvious as it may be, it bares repeating, that severe suicidal depression makes you long for your past, to remember life without the dread of depression, a happy life. When Evangeline came along, I'd finally found that happiness.

Realizing my lack of desire for success, her Dad judged me as an impediment to Evangeline's future; hence, whenever he saw me, he frowned. Of course, had she lived, he would have been absolutely correct. Perhaps, Evangeline could have made me a better man, but with her death, I crumbled back into misery, and started my second big bout with depression and drinking, but this one only lasted only two years. I stopped playing songs on the car radio, since Evangeline always sang to them. Like

anything else, with enough experience, you can come to better manage your depression; still often, it's like trying to hold a pint of whiskey, without the bottle. Through the years, I've tried to figure out why I fell so hard for her. The answer was simple. It was the entirety of her, the amalgam of all of her parts and behaviors, the summation of all those beautiful physical and spiritual elements. The wonderment of it all pinged on so many areas of my gray goop. She literally trapped me, and owned my soul in such a fine manner.

Years later, whenever I'd tell someone about my history with Evangeline, I'd lie, by not mentioning her death. What was the point? Usually, I'd just say that her dad broke us up, that he wasn't happy that I was white, and he was racially prejudice and overly strict, and to some degree that was indeed true. That's what I told Margo, my wife. By employing that partial truth, there was no need to relive what happened, and so there was less pain. The omission allowed me to clean the wound, without having to rip the scab off. I used the alcohol to keep the wound from spreading with infection. I was sixty-five years old, when I started writing these books, and I can still feel Evangeline and the scab.

The her untimely death seemed to start when Evangeline stepped-off a curb in front of a downtown DC department store. But, she didn't fall, just unexpectedly sat down in the curb gutter, on the edge of the street, her hip right was up against the curb. At least that's what she later told me, when she phoned me from her hospital room.

Her upper thigh bone (femur) didn't break because she fell, but it had simply broken, when she stepped down off the curb, and so this caused her to suddenly sit down in the shallow concrete gutter on the edge of the curb. She then noticed that she couldn't get back up. I wasn't present when it occurred, yet I have a vivid memory of it, just as if I saw it happen, I supposed because she described it so well. Old memories can be tricky like that, as well as painful.

Evangeline had been out shopping with her young stepmom. Contrary to her Dad's wishes, she was going to take me to one of his *State Department* functions, and she wanted something nice to wear. I was going to rent a suit or tux. The event was to be a huge outdoor event, a picnic in *Rock Creek Park*. Evangeline later called me from her hospital room, doped-up on morphine. She said that some medical

tests were being run, and that she'd somehow broken her leg. She made it seem as if her injury was nothing. Morphine's like that, for not only does it block pain, but in addition, it blocks fear. Too bad, it's addicting and causes constipation!

A couple of days later, the physicians informed her dad that the bone had broken, because of an osteosarcoma, a common, but deadly, form of bone cancer, which weakens the bone, and spreads rapidly. There was no surgery or life-saving amputation, which could be performed, because the cancer had already metastasized, to several locations, and so it was deemed to be too late. I was angry with her stepmom for taking her shopping, and I was angry with the doctors for delivering the bad news, as if it was somehow their fault, that she had cancer. Evangeline accepted her impending death with grace, similar to how my friend Matt had accepted the neuroblastoma. Few dying people can accomplish that. Oddly enough, I've only known four different people, who had been told they were dying. One ended-up living, my aforementioned friend, Matt, with the neuroblastoma. All four accepted their death without noticeable fear.

While she was dying, I tried to look unaffected,

but Evangeline saw right through me. My Dad, Matt, and a woman named Mary Dishmon displayed what might be called tranquil grace, while facing eminent death. Mary had been a heroin addict, who died from complications associated with diabetes. Heroin abuse has been linked to an increased risk of diabetes. She was one of the kindest persons I've ever known. Because of her addiction, her family had rejected her, ergo she was facing death alone, so she asked me to take care of her, and I hardly knew her. I'd just meant her that same morning, when she was crying in the produce aisle at the grocery store, and I asked her what was wrong. Often I've thought these people were placed in my path to teach me how to die, or at least so I don't end-up making a complete fool of myself, when the end comes.

A week later, and still in the hospital, Evangeline started saying that she was having off and on bouts of vertigo and headaches. As mentioned, she'd been found to have several more tumors, but the fatal one was situated in her brainstem, and was inoperable. A few days passed, and she endured a violent seizure, went into coma, never coming out, dying two days later. Those memories are vague, probably due to sleep loss, and subsequent alcohol abuse.

During this her last few days, her dad and I barely spoke, just a sentence or two now and then. Sitting in the hospital, we mostly read magazines and newspapers. He did some paper work. At least, he didn't frown at me. Sitting in her hospital room was the only time, he and I remotely got along. We'd look for magazines to read, and we'd buy each other small things to eat and drink. I focused on being polite to him, and only discussed the inevitable, if he brought it up. At least she died pain free and unconscious.

Evangeline's beautiful stepmom showed-up only once at the hospital, but she quickly begged-off, by saying that she couldn't stomach hospitals. Some folks are so heavily focused on money, that it's only when they're on the verge of death, that they come to realize they completely missed out on living. Perhaps in a way, that's where Maslow's *Hierarchy of Needs*, misses the boat. For some greedy people, no matter how well their other needs are satisfied, they never self-actualize... maybe just too much ego, and/or too little intelligence, to involve themselves in things like goodness and creativity. Moreover, Maslow likes to assume that motivation is largely determined by how well certain needs are satisfied, but he fails to consider that motivation is largely

about dopamine in the *Substantia Nigra*, as well as other dopaminergic parts of the brain. Low dopamine means low motivation, and so it's unfair to expect a longterm addict, who's permanently low on brain dopamine, to quit their habit.

The day Evangeline died, I had momentarily ducked-out of the hospital to buy her a bunch of white roses. My thinking was that even if she were still in a coma, she yet might be able to enjoy the fragrance. I didn't buy red roses, because I knew her dad would be there, and it was not the time to throw the idea of romance in his face. The sense of smell is genetically old, and so I assumed that some primitive portion of her brain might yet be able to detect the beautiful fragrance, and it could perhaps bring her some measure of joy. However, at some point on my way back to the hospital, she'd stopped breathing, and her heart had stopped beating, so I wasn't with her, when she died, and I felt bad about not being there, and wondered if some unconscious part of her mind had thought I'd abandoned her. Fortunately, her dad was with her.

Many years later, my Dad would die, without my being there. The attending doctor had told me he would pass in about two or three days, so I went to

work that fateful morning, assuming I still had time to be with Dad, but he died while I was at work... died without my being there. In addition, I once took care of a dying friend. Diabetes and kidney failure took her, while I had gone to the store to buy her some food, when she went into diabetic coma and passed. Perhaps, I'll be there for my own death, but I'd just as soon not know it's coming. Perchance, a locomotive will hit me, while I'm crossing the tracks, and I'll never know it coming. When I returned to the hospital ward, with Evangeline's white roses in hand, a kindly old nurse, who'd no doubt seen death many times, delivered the news. She simply whispered the phase, with folded hands, and a lowered her somber gaze.

"I'm sorry to tell you, but she's passed away, Joey."

The words registered, but I didn't allow them to be real, and so I just continued on down the hall toward Evangeline's room, as if the sweet old nurse had said something trivial. As I looked into the sterile quiet little hospital room, her dad was sitting in a chair silently crying, his face buried in his hands. My eyes shifted to Evangeline's lifeless body, laying face-up on the bed. I silently stepped half way into the

room and could feel she was gone. There was an urge to resolve her death, but her skin looked like it had a waxy film to it. That dead black beauty on those stark white sheets is still a terrible memory. It was good that it took time for her to die, since it gave me time to say things to her, before she went into a coma... things that I would have regretted not saying, those words may've been the only good thing about her death.

That little hospital room scene, of her crying dad and her dead body was like framed in a paralyzing tunnel vision. I felt myself falling down the proverbial rabbit hole. A couple of times, I tried to correct my perception, of that scene, but of course, nothing changed, so when her dad at last looked-up and saw me, I just respectfully nodded, turned, and walked-away, and that was the last we saw of each other. Besides, I had no desire to be closer to her dead body.

A large part of me felt guilty for not being there, when Evangeline died. There was no purpose in going to her funeral, and there wasn't enough alcohol to enable me. Everyone tells me that funerals aren't for the dead, but for the friends and relatives... maybe so. I didn't even look for the obituary, and

never did I bother to phone her dad. Once someone is gone, I don't see the point to ceremony. We'd been together for eight months, but a lot of life had filled that time.

There was no point in speaking with her dad. He and I were a million light years apart, and were both miserable. Neither of us really wanted to comfort the other. With her death, we no longer had anything in common, only misery. A couple of days prior, while wondering around the hospital, I'd seen a small chapel on the second floor. The room was no bigger than a child's playroom, with just a single wooden bench in front of a three foot white wooden altar. A piece of pressed linen was laid across its' top, with a shiny one foot tall brass cross, on top. Just in case my ideas on religion were wrong, I prayed for her soul, but received no indication that I was heard. I never have received a response from prayer, except for once, many years later, I did. In my wildest imagination, I'd never dreamt, that I could be devastated by anyone's death. After all, in those days, I largely lacked empathy.

The guilty undertaker sighs

The lonesome organ grinder cries

The silver saxophones say I should refuse you
The cracked bells and washed-out horns
Blow into my face with scorn
But it's not that way, I wasn't born to lose you
Bob Dylan's "*I Want You*" (*Blonde on Blonde*, 1966)

The chapel was no help, neither was God. A good christian might simply say that God just decided to take her... just decided away! The world threatened to be so different. The white roses had been forgotten, left on the little white altar, next to the cross. I walked out the hospital doors, through the doors of the nearest bar, and parked my butt on top of the first available barstool. Without looking, I raised my hand for the bartender. There in the crowded bar, I felt like the last person on earth. Initially, I drank fast, three quick shots, then I strategically changed to slow deliberate sipping, with the usual water chasers... sub-emetic drinking for mental health purposes... a well practiced and effective psychiatric treatment, if there ever was one. After her death, I enjoyed a year's worth of periodic visions of, and sometimes conversations, with Evangeline, but never when I was drunk. The

drinking sort of delayed or stopped them, so they'd later be more powerful, more real. Those encounters were fairly vivid; she looked so real, and the conversations delightful, but only at first. Frequently, I'd find myself laughing with her, then not so much. These weren't reruns, like my usually flashbacks, but rather new and fresh interactions. Though enjoyable, the realization that I was hallucinating later left me depressed, so I'd turn to drink once more. For me, alcohol delayed both flashbacks and hallucinations, and while it's not good for you, it's fairly quick and effective; it's the ever escalating dosage of booze, which becomes the problem. Sitting in the bar, I realized that I'd never again have a romantic love like Evangeline.

Expectations of lost love... the most authentic of disappointments.

Sailing Off The Edge by C. Columbus Morley

Being an experienced drinker, I knew how to medicate my morbid mental state, while periodically drinking water to stay hydrated, and so after a while, I didn't feel quite as bad. The day of her death, the

bartender had asked how my day had been going, and so I mentioned the hospital scene. He didn't ask me more questions, and made me a present of a free pint bottle of top shelf bourbon, before he kicked me out and locked the doors that night. That's one of the problems with alcohol... it doesn't last long enough, and it leaves you in something of a stupid smelly toxic state. Still, the brown liquor allowed me to better manage, where God's help remained only a mystery. It was like the ground was gone beneath me, but I could still walk. The world had turned into something like Hiroshima, after 'Little Boy' had been dropped, except that all the people and buildings were still there. Thanks to the situation and the booze, I became a shadowy specter, wondering through places, with the pain always threatening to attack me; after all, a tremendous part of me had been ripped away... how I miss her!

[https://www.google.com/?client=safari#q=I
+ wish + somebody + would + come + and + ease + my
+ troubling + mind](https://www.google.com/?client=safari#q=I+wish+somebody+would+come+and+ease+my+troubling+mind)

For my tastes, there are far too many strange and useless manmade customs and rituals in the world;

whatever controls the masses. People uttering chants, singing religious songs, hours on their knees praying about everything from the power bill to cancer, uncreative people uttering redundant phrases, singing praises to a God, who's probably not there, waving incense around in the air, etc. Everyone has their all knowing angle on God. People only have so much time on earth, so why waste it on rituals? Rituals just help to reenforce the brainwashing. Nevertheless, you'd think all that mumbo jumbo could at least help with life's pain. Many years later, I would lose yet another girlfriend, Kelly. She's not discussed in these books. She died due to an undiagnosed brain aneurism, a 'berry aneurism,' which somehow ruptured at a young age. Kelly went to the hospital, because she was feeling dizzy. After she checked in, they told her to have a seat. Two hours later they called her name, but she was dead still sitting in the ER, waiting to be seen. Later, I found-out about that from her mom. I wasn't there when she got dizzy and died, since there were no cellphones, then. After her death, I'd again, turn to the medicinal use of alcohol. It took me six months to finally throw-out Kelly's clothes from my apartment. Still, her death was easier than Evangeline's. Kelly was definitely a heavy duty

alcoholic and pill popper. It was probably the adderall that popped that blood vessel in her brain. Her mom and dad took the body back to Huntsville, and I never visited the grave.

Right after Evangeline's death, I suffered with a weird form of repetitive psychopathology. This also happened after Kelly's death, but not as long. It has something to do with what people might call 'sweet sorrow.' I'm certain there is a psych term for what I'm about to describe, but I haven't a clue what it is. Everywhere I went, I recalled only the best aspects of our time together, the most loving and happy memories of being with Evangeline. Those fond memories would appear, without my consciously sequestering them. They'd fondly show-up all on their own, ergo my soul would be clawed by a hunger to hold her, to kiss her, to inhale her sweet young aroma. Nothing cuts more deeply, than when half of a love affair dies, and the natural inclination of the mind is to recall only the best of times. There wasn't enough whiskey in Ireland...

My foolishly self-destructive brain became hopelessly addicted to redundantly bringing-up those loving memories, which then brought-on the feelings loss and morbid depression, hence the 'sweet sorrow,'

then the resultant drinking followed to stop the sadness. My life was plagued with those sweet-and-sour reruns, which also lead to depressive nightmares, and the associated night-time drinking. After Evangeline died, that stupid psychiatric roller coaster lasted for nearly two years. To some unknown extent, I feel that the nightmares were due to alcohol withdrawals. The first year was terrible, and second year wasn't as bad. And then, came Margo, my wife, to breathe life back into me. I meant Margo shortly after I'd stopped drinking, and she got me smoking weed, which seemed much more healthy, than alcohol.

This sweet-sorrow-drinking phenomenon was like picking a scab; it feels good to get the itchy scab off, but then the air gets on the raw tissue and it hurts, the booze numbs the pain, but the re-injury takes longer to heal. Recalling the pleasant memories of Evangeline became something of an addiction, which along with the booze, took a dramatic toll on me. I stopped doing almost everything, including sex. I dropped a lot of weight, since food seemed superfluous, if not unappealing. Happiness had vanished and my body was steadily wasting away, mostly because of the booze and lack of food.

As the months passed, often her prepossessing memories seemed more vital, than my actual life... wonderful memories and flashbacks, followed by the corresponding despair, and the medicinal drinking. I can still recall what she looked like, the beautiful snowy evening we meant, what we did together, how she felt and tasted, things she said, but then one day, I couldn't recall the sound of her voice, still I know it had a rich good-natured stimulating quality, which had made me want her, but I can no longer hear it in my mind's ear. Though her voice was clearly feminine, it had a certain tightest to it, but I can't hear it in my memories of her, nor have I heard someone speak, with a voice like hers. The days she was dying are also hard to recall.

Late in the evening, and I was jogging in the foothills of the Rocky Mountains. Looking down the mountainside, I saw that someone had left the back gate to the zoo unlocked. There were no people inside the grounds of the zoo, so I trotted down the side of the mountain and into the zoo through the open gate. Walking past the cages and displays, I saw Evangeline in a cage. Though it was sad to see her locked-up like that, I was filled with happiness, because she was yet alive. I called to her, but she

didn't respond. She couldn't hear or see me, but she was not suffering. She had on her hippy clothes, then she finally looked at me and said, "It's okay, Joey", then she stared away, ending the dream.

After awakening, I was depressed for having lost her yet again, and the idea of her being in a cage haunted me. The night of that dream, I got-up, and went drinking and driving. Thanks to the aforementioned 'micro-steering,' which the Navy lieutenant had taught me as a child, I've never been given a DUI, but should have received many of them. In a very real way, a dead girlfriend outclasses any living girl. Life's loving memories certainly are more interesting than the humdrum of day-to-day life, yet they also have a way of destroying you. For two years, after Evangeline died, it seemed like I aged at three times the normal rate. On those rare nights, when I did not have a nightmare, I'd awaken and feel fine, until the memory of Evangeline's death would hit home, then I'd drink a big mouthful of whiskey, before heading for the warm relaxing shower. As mentioned, I became a strategic drinker. Standing under the hot spray, I'd sip the shower water, which together with the shot would take the edge-off the handover, as well as the edge-off Evangeline's death.

So many things reminded me of her... triggers. Each day was managed by regular doses of booze, carefully spaced-out shots, and the corresponding glasses of water, to lessen the hangover. This uncomplicated process gave me the allusion of having control. I recall complimenting myself for controlling my drinking, that way. Late in the evening, I'd drink several shots to get to sleep. Where alcohol withdrawals had nearly destroyed me as a child, alcohol rescued me as a young adult. Once I tried weed to deal with the depression of her death, but for me, the weed was horrible; all it did was to make me think about her more, intensifying the depression. Being stoned on weed and not being able to avoid thinking about her was a bad experience. I didn't do weed again, until I meant my wife, but by then, I was partly recovered.

For that first year, wherever I went, I would smuggle liquor along. No one seemed to even notice my drinking, or maybe they were just being polite. I'd chew a lot of gum, and drank plenty of water. Regularly, I went in bathrooms locked the door, then would washout and dry my smelly armpits. I carried a can of cheap spray deodorant in the car. Since I spent my entire childhood drinking, I was more than

accustomed to the effects and how to conceal them. Consequently, it's hard for people to tell if I'm drunk or sober. Not even my highly perceptive child can tell. Looking back, the booze helped me to get through Evangeline's death; after all, docs prescribe antidepressants, but with the whiskey, I knew exactly what to expect, and could manage the dosage and side effects. The damage of all that drinking, may also be why the memories of Evangeline, cast such long shadows, and aren't in a nice neat timeline. One day, I think people will use vaping, the smokeless tobacco substitute, in place of certain addicting antidepressants with their crappy side effects. Sure, nicotine is addicting, but so are many antidepressants, and the vape is cheaper than antidepressants, and doesn't require an expensive visit to the doctor to get the script. More importantly, my bet is that the vapor is far less carcinogenic, than cigarettes. Fortunately or unfortunately, romantic love never came again, just a series of temporary relationships; some good, and some not so good. Before I knew Evangeline, I was never lonely, when I was alone.

...They walked along by the old canal

A little confused, I remember well
And stopped into a strange hotel
With a neon burnin' bright
He felt the heat of the night
Hit him like a freight train
Moving with a simple twist of fate...

Bob Dylan's, *Simple Twist of Fate*

OB!



THE KKK COMES TO TOWN

A few weeks, before Joyce took off work from *The Hound's* diner, to have her beautiful mixed baby girl, by unplanned happenstance, I attended a publicly held KKK meeting. Back then, the klan's public meetings and marches were a common occurrence in the deep south. They actually got air-time on the TV, as if they were an acceptable run-of-the-mill organization. Many people openly admitted they supported the klan, or admitted their own membership. Certainly, I never had planned on taking part in such an erudite convocation, but by accident, I happened to run across the meeting, and was driven to attend by my own curiosity. It wasn't so much that I wanted to know more about their social philosophy, as I was interested in the types of people, who would invest their life in such a sad social philosophy. Through the years, I've found that most klan members aren't too bright, yet some are actually quite intelligent, and they're often the leaders. It is the brilliant ones, who may have more than their share of hate-generating neurons, and a desire to control others, some probably enjoy the money the klan provides them.

One clear light blue sunny afternoon, while driving down Aldock Road in Mobile, I was passing the eleven hundred acre *Chickasabogue Park*, When I noticed a large dirty white canvas tent had been erected in one of the park's bright open grassy areas, only a few yards off the road. The filthy old tent seemed to soil the nature of the park. To the best of my recollection, there had never before been a tent in the park. Driving passed the tent, I glanced back at it, and saw the entrance flap was pulled back. The opening was guarded by a tall beefy man, dressed in the traditional white robes of the *KKK*, but with his hood pushed back, revealing his entire head and face. *If you see a circus tent, expect the clowns.* Paradoxically, I then thought of the old gospel song, *When the Saints Go Marching In*, but most klan members are anything but saintly.

Living in the neck-deep South, there is no doubt that I've known many klan members, and while some seemed nice enough in their dealings with me, I've a feeling that such kindness doesn't extend to many people of color. I've only meant one kluxer, who was open about his membership. How they behave toward other races, in fact, all other races, is another thing all together. How a person can be so nice to

one race, and not to another seems like a form of insanity. For all I know, it's already in the DMS 6. Many klan members, who I strongly suspect as being kluxers, can't stop bitching about welfare. I do agree that welfare has destroyed many people's incentive to work; nevertheless, it was white men, who came-up with welfare, and there are plenty of white's, who receive it, not just blacks. The klan reminds me of ants, who attack any ant, which is not their specie. If everyone was white, my bet is that those same kluxers would still discriminate, about something: hair color or length, eye color, height, weight, intelligence, age, hygiene, etc. Most of those *KKK* folks just need someone to hate.

[https://www.google.com/?client=safari#q=when + the + saints + go + marching + in](https://www.google.com/?client=safari#q=when+the+saints+go+marching+in)

Hiding my car several streets away, I jogged back through the blocks, and walked-up to the opening of the canvas tent. The big *KKK* fella guarding the entrance, sported a scalp-hugging crew-cut. Buckled around his semi-white klan robe was a sinister brown leather gun belt and holster, containing what

appeared to be a large .45 caliber old-fashioned western styled revolver. The gun and holster made me momentarily think of the TV show, *Gun Smoke*; that opening scene, of the gunfight in the street, where Matt Dillon fires last, but accurately. As a child, I'd loved the show, I suppose it was Matt's courage.

The tent guard had a ruddy heavily pock-marked face, and ignored me, even though I was standing in front of him. There seemed to be an absence of caring in his small vexed eyes. I recall wondering what would happen to me, if I walked around in the park, with a .45 strapped to my hip. Try as I might, I couldn't see the need for wearing the weapon. *What would happen, if a black man openly wore a sidearm like that in Mobile?* No doubt if a black man had dared to walk around the park with a gun on his hip, he'd have been arrested, then worse things would soon follow. Back then, there was also a fair chance, he'd have been summarily shot, and the cop who did the shooting would have received a promotion. On the other hand, such a black man might have been beaten senseless in one of those interrogation rooms.

"Is this klan meeting open to the public, sir?" I asked, while standing in front of Mr. Crew-cut.

“Its open to anyone, who seeks the truth.” Mr. Crew-cut solemnly and loudly responded, still without meeting my eyes. *What a fucking load!*

Never looking in my direction, he elevated, and jutted-out his, chin to utter those sage words, as if he was announcing them to the entire city.

Concurrently, he lifted his left arm and rotated his left thumb over his shoulder, to point toward the tent opening. *He thinks of himself as a guard, as if there is actually some threat, in this peaceful park.* As I walked passed him, I saw that his holstered weapon had white handgrips, which looked like they could have been made of ivory, and they had the red number 33 inlaid. Later, I found out that thirty-three is a number sequence signifying 3×11 , with ‘K’ being the eleventh letter in the alphabet; hence, 33 indirectly signifies *KKK*... not exactly advanced cryptology.

Don’t you just love people, who are absolutely certain about their particular version of the truth, their place in life, their interpretation of reality, no matter how radical or ridiculous it may be? From al-Qaeda to the American Nazi party, they’ve all stretched reality to fit their perspectives gray matter. And quite often, they believe that God is on their side, and they love to tell people that! The world of

uneducated dangerous people, just seems to be growing faster, every year. Why is it that so few people seem to be able to question their own 'wisdom'? The old phrase... *Often wrong, but seldom in doubt*... drifted through my mind, as I entered the small mildew stinking circus tent. The air inside was also thick with humidity. Almost any phrase can be bent (interpreted) to suit the bender, much as I'm bending words, in this hodgepodge of scribbles to suit me, and my interpretation of reality.

Not surprisingly, there wasn't a single minority in the tent. On the other hand, a couple of accompanied women were present, if you consider women to be a minority. I've never understood why women are referred to as a minority, when in actual numbers, in most of the countries, as in the United States, the fairer sex is generally the majority, so males are the minority. The female minority misnomer has to be something political, probably created by some extreme feminist. Perhaps the most impressive feminist is Emily Wilding Davison (1872-1913). She was an English suffragette, who fought for women's voting rights. The woman warrior was arrested at least nine times, went on many hunger strikes, and was force fed forty-nine

times. She died after being hit by King George V's horse, when she purposely stepped out onto the track, during the race. The rednecks, here in Mobile, would probably just call her a stupid bitch.

In spite of that, I do feel that the gentler sex does deserve special consideration, in lieu of the oppression that they've been forced to endure, due to the simple fact that they have less muscle mass. It's also my subjective opinion, that one of the differences between most female and male brains, is that the males tend to have more ego and aggression, ergo males are more apt to be more: assertive, pushy, verbose, opinionated, angry, and violent. If I'm right about that, then in general, females deserve special consideration for having to endure and/or defend against those traits. Too often, women have been discriminated against in the home, the workplace, and in politics. Too many times, I've observed men, claiming they were being protective, when in fact they were being controlling, if not downright abusive... men using their size and strength, and the aggressive parts of their minds, for their personal gain at the expense of weaker, less assertive, people. Oddly enough, some of these men actually don't realize just how horrible they are. This is not to say

that some women are not stronger than many men, nor it designed to say they lack courage, quite the opposite.

Nevertheless, women are not a minority, in the more modern countries of the world, possibly attesting to some form of superior physiology. As mentioned, the X chromosome is larger than the Y chromosome, and women have two of them, and men only have one X, and one Y. On the other hand, it does seem that most of the profound geniuses of the world have been men, and male to female geniuses are about two to one. But while there may be more men geniuses, there are more stupid men than women. This implies something of a bimodal distribution of men's IQs. There are more men on the left side of the bell curve, but there are more male geniuses on the right side, twice the number of male geniuses. This dichotomous dumb-smart male situation causes some people to look at men as being either idiots, or brainiacs. Of course, it's probably the women on the left side of the curve, who make such a one-sided assessment. The fact is that you've got to take each person as they come, but more importantly it's good to judge people by the good they do, and by their integrity, rather than their IQ. I've known a

shitload of geniuses and many of them aren't worse a damn.

<https://www.dailymail.co.uk/news/article-483707/Only-men-geniuses--far-stupid-men-women.html>

In the countries of the G7 (Canada, France, Germany, Japan, Italy, England, and the United States) the ratio of men to women is in favor of the women. Not surprisingly, in countries where there is a clear cultural bias against women, the reverse is true, e.g., India, Saudi Arabia, China, etc. In those countries, women are actually in the minority! Imagine that! Doesn't that make you wonder about what happens in those countries to produce a drop in the girl babies, or to reduce the survival of females? My feeling is that the stresses of an oppressive life kills them sooner... shortens their lives. Genetically and evolutionarily speaking, I think women are designed to live longer since they are more apt to contribute to the survival of grandchildren and great grandchildren, whereas old men can become cantankerous, and more of a burden.

Inside the oppressive dimly lit circus tent, there were erected two small sets of wooden bleachers, constructed of heavy iron take-down frames, legs, and rails, with what looked like long two-by-twelve inch wooden planks, forming the seats and footrests. The hot air in the tent was unbearable, and I started to sweat, then thankfully someone opened two more tent flaps for more ventilation and light; still, the smell of mildew remained stifling. My seat was only a couple of rows up, and on the end closest to the tent's entrance. Having a naturally elevated level of paranoia, I've always had an instinct for positioning myself for quick escape. Even as a child, when attending the bullfights in Spain, I usually sat close to an exit. Now days, when I go to the movies, my daughter prefers to sit in the middle of the top row, which drives me completely nuts; still, for the privilege of her company, I happily deal with my paranoia; and no, I don't have claustrophobia, though I was once stuck between floors in an elevator with a psychologist who did. For about ten minutes, while the elevator was stopped, the kindly psychologist gave new meaning to the phrase, 'freaking-out.' Almost all the psychologists I've know have had at least one loose screw, usually several, and they like to believe everyone does, and even if I

do, most people don't.

A dozen uniformed *KKK* members were stationed around the inside of the canvas walls of the tent, standing about four feet apart and at parade-rest, as if they thought they were in the military. Not a single one of them smiled. Studying their solemn faces, I felt safe in assuming that none were rocket engineers. Each man wore a holstered side-arm, over the outside of their cumbersome robes. All carried revolvers, except for one, who wore a 9 mm Luger in a bastardized open holster, which seemed ridiculous yet appropriate, since members of the Nazi SS were known to carry that weapon, and as you might imagine, many klansmen are also members of the *American Nazi Party*. A few years later, I would meet a murderer, with such a dual membership. He stuck the muzzle of a military carbine in my face, right after he'd shot and killed two young black men, and accidentally wounded an adolescent white girl, as described in the eight book of this series in the chapter entitled, *North of the Border*.

The armed klansmen just stood evenly spaced around the inside perimeter of the tent, like wooden Indians, although a couple of them did occasionally nod at people in the bleachers, as if they knew them.

The apparent head of the group was standing on a slightly raised wooden platform, behind an unfinished plywood podium, directly between and in front of the two sets of bleachers. The apparent KKK leader seemed most eager to address the murmuring crowd, and was mysteriously dressed in an opulent shiny purple uniform, instead of the usual white. Like the other klansmen, his hood was pushed back, revealing his well scrubbed white face. His light brown hair was worn in a conventional fashion, albeit slightly long, and he sported a brownish blond mustache.

Unlike the other klansmen, he wore no visible weapon, so I figured he was likely the most dangerous member of the group. Who the hell came-up with such a strange fashion statement, as the KKK uniform? *It looks like an extra large woman's nightgown, or a monk's robe.* What paramilitary group in their right mind would consider wearing such a cumbersome and ridiculous looking outfit? I suppose the feminine dress-like lower half would let one ride a horse, but the hood has to be a major visual obstruction, and in the sizzling hot southern summers, the uniform must have been miserable. Most likely, the uniform was created simply because

anyone could get a hold of a sheet or a pillowcase... easy peezy. Besides the uniform, the only other items the klan uses are: guns, ropes, whips, fuel, and large wooden crosses.

Someone once told me, that just after the war between the states, the klan started by wearing flour sacks over their heads. Later, they added a few tweaks, such as embroidered patches, then the less than swanky uniform stopped evolving. The *KKK* regalia seems so impractical, except for the fact that it hides the wearers' identity. The uniform can't be good for running, or fighting, but maybe its good for Halloween, though I doubt that a lot of people would open their door, if first, they looked through their peep-hole. Likely, a fair percentage of the *KKK* members enjoy the idea of people fearing them.

Those who enjoy intimidation have likely been damaged and weakened early in life, and are less likely to analyze their own motives, for fear of meeting themselves.

Surfing Fake News by Arley Moe Williams

Mr. Purple, standing erect behind the plywood

podium, had quasi-friendly blue eyes; at least he did, at the outset of his presentation. He appeared to be young, about my age; this surprised me. His upper lip sported a well trimmed mustache. For a few minutes, Mr. Purple just silently stood on the dais, and stared straight ahead, as if he was the caption on the bridge of a ship, gazing-out at the watery horizon, looking for whales to harpoon.

How often is something only what a person perceives?

Poison The Ivy by Willy M. Reoy

As people continued to arrive, he'd smiled his weird smile and nodded, as if he was genuinely happy to see them. Sometimes, the smile seemed fairly real, but too often, it was just his upper lip being voluntarily pulled tight across the tops of the upper row of very white teeth, but without the corresponding creases in the corners of his eyes. Sometimes his lower front teeth also showed as part of the bogus smile, with the lower lip curled inwards. *He looks like he's going to bite someone.* The smile was disturbing, since it conveyed something vicious. My

impression was that he actually thought no one noticed his smile was fraudulent, or perchance he didn't care, or maybe he actually thought people couldn't tell the difference. The pseudo smile was more than slightly eerie. *Something about this guy is broken.* Occasionally, the upper lip rolled under, when stretched too tight, which lowered his mustache to his upper central incisors. In my years of subjective observation, such phony smiles come from two groups.

One group is made-up of unfortunate people, who are just too stressed-out to be able to manage a sincere smile, but still would like to be able to generate such a genuine expression. The second group is made-up of evil people, who hate too much, to be able to create an authentic smile, and those evil folks don't care whether the fake smile is believed or not. Mr. Purple didn't seem stressed-out. One of the guards pulled back yet another tent flap to provide even more air, and that's when Mr. Purple launched into his speech. *Anything to reduce the mildew smell, in here.* Perchance, mildew should be the state flower of Alabama, instead of the camellia. To begin with, Mr. Purple, nodded his head, thanked everyone for coming, then while gripping the sides of the plywood

podium, he confidently continued his unconvincing ten minute unconvincing diatribe, about the unfair public opinion, which had been levied against the ‘wondrous Christian empire of the KKK.’ He ranted on about the klan and their illustrious record of community service, as well as their strict adherence to Christian principles. He claimed the klan was not against blacks per se, as much as it was pro whites. As he talked, his head would be tilted back, and slowly swivel from left to right, then he quickly pulled it back to the left, and start the slow left to right scan; again. That head movement went on throughout his presentation. He didn’t allow his gaze to stay fixed on anyone person. He proclaimed that the klan was actually in favor of limited types of racial collaboration in the workplace, but of course, he was strictly against various types of more personal intra-racial socializing. At this point, an idea started to form.

It was his contention that the klan did not believe in harming anyone. *Boy, that’s sure not what I’ve heard.* With that comment, it looked like the rubber band was about ready to snap. Most people, I’ve suspected as being klansmen, claim they’re not racially prejudice, they tend to stay focused on those

blacks, who do not work, or who are on welfare, and those who are below average in intelligence, as if there are no whites, who fall into those same categories. Most of these suspected klansmen also tend to ignore, or overlook, the fact that there are hard working, successful, and highly intelligent blacks. Such whites tend to look at working productive intelligent blacks as being rare, while they correspondingly they overlook any unfair disadvantages, which blacks may have had to endure, i.e., extreme poverty, police brutality, various forms of social oppression, poor education, etc. In their minds, these disadvantages are just excuses blacks invent to justify their failures. I'm sure it's a rare thing to hear a klansman describe something brilliantly done by a black person or a Jew? Conveniently, Mr. Purple omitted the simple fact that the only thing that honestly matters about people is the good they do, relative to their ability to do so... the content of their character, as Dr. King might have said. At that particular time, Martin Luther King was doing his Poor Person's Campaign. The people I've thought were *KKK* members like to share antidotal stories, about dumb stuff they claimed to have seen or heard some black person do or say, thereby affirming the superiority of the white

race, at least in their minds. The problem with such vulgar doings is that they demean all concerned, but especially the storytellers. Telling such maligning stories about black people was something my uneducated Grandma and Great Aunt never tired of indulging in such. And while some of the stories about blacks may have occasionally been true, don't we all do stupid things, now and then, regardless of our intellect or race? Even Einstein was known to have committed a couple of social whoppers. Why did he try to hide his first illegitimate child, a girl? Very little is known of her. He also married his first cousin, to whom he was related on both sides of his family. One old scientist also told me that Einstein refused to wear socks and so had the standout trait of 'stink foot,' but didn't really give a damn, who his smelly feet offended. At that time, had Einstein been black and living in the South, you can bet he'd most likely would have never gotten a serious ear full for his various theories, and would have been roundly criticized, if not lynched, for his above mentioned indiscretions; and given the fact that he was in fact a Jew, he might have been run out of town, or worse had he lived in Mobile.

Like other religious zealots, klansmen constantly

search for ways to support their own prejudicial philosophies and opinions, rather than questioning their ideas and beliefs. Few people honestly seek pure truth, especially when it comes to things like culture, race, sexual preference, and religion. The older I get, the more science seems to be the only honest search for truth; still, too many scientists are concerned with their own fame, rather than with the thrill of genuine discovery, or with the pushing back of the frontiers of darkness, and the solving of problems. Occasionally, Mr. Purple would laugh at what he claimed were spurious assumptions made against the klan's splendid history. Some people's laughs are too loud and harsh, some irritating, but Mr. Purple's laugh, though not extremely loud, was wheeled like a scythe through tender shafts of wheat. His chortle was intended to indicate that the 'untruths' about the klan were laughingly ridiculous, but what crossed my mind was that he was unconsciously laughing at the audience for believing his lies.

If you want to get rich, you start a religion.

Comment supposedly made by L. Ron Hubbard in response to a question from the audience

during a meeting of the *Eastern Science Fiction Association* (1948), as quoted in a 1994 affidavit by Sam Moskowitz.

I've often heard this same type of laugh used by wealthy and/or powerful folks, but who are relatively uneducated and self-indulgent. It's used as a form of conversational control, where the laughing person cares little about the listeners, but just wants center-stage. The technique is sometimes employed to make-up for the lack of content in their conversation. Listening to Mr. Purple, you would have thought that the klan was framed for every single lynching and beating of by-gone days. He claimed that any such crimes were either committed by rogue klansmen, acting without authorization, or by some arbitrary people, who had conveniently blamed their misdeed on the klan. Thinking back, Mr. Purple used one ambiguous phase a few times.

“... we (the klan) want to keep America for Americans.”

Boy! That phase could mean all kinds of things. I doubt he was talking about the American Indians. The word “keep” might have encompassed assorted forms of crime and terror, and the word “Americans”

might have been synonymous with the word, 'whites.' *Wonder if he wants the return of the 'Whites Only' bathrooms and water fountains, or slavery?* Of course, he claimed that the klan acted as the 'right hand of the Lord,' but failed to mention that God's hand held a whip or a lynching rope. Few things wear a more deceptive mask, than a self-deluded corrupt official, claiming that he or she has the backing of the deity. Often in war, both sides vehemently claim that God is on their side, that way their brutalities are holy and just. All the destroyed businesses, burned-out homes, bloody beatings, and senseless killings suddenly take on an air of righteous, in an old testament kind of way. This 'God is on our side' is also good for the soldiers to believe such, so they're more apt to charge into the guns, and not hesitate to kill the 'enemy,' and in so doing, make money for their respective military industries, as well as support their various political leaders, who work on behalf of those industries. The sign of a good bootcamp drill instructor is that he effectively breaks down the recruit, so that he or she better configures their actions to the needs of the military, which conform to the political whims of the day, which in turn best serve the needs of mega military corporations. The klan's use of God helps them to get

more converts, and to persuade their members to make larger, more frequent, donations, and to carry-out various heinous crimes. Nothing has been abused quite as much as the Bible and God.

The Scriptures have been misused to defend bloody crusades and inquisitions; to support slavery, apartheid, and segregation; to sanction the physical and emotional abuse of women and children; to persecute Jews and other non-Christian people of faith; to support the holocaust of Hitler's Third Reich; to oppose medical science; to condemn inter-racial marriage; to execute women as witches; to excuse the violent racism of the Ku Klux Klan; to mobilize militias, white supremacy and neo-nazi movements; and to condone intolerance and discrimination against sexual minorities.

Mel White

That Purple robed man on the podium reminded me of a robed Pope, but with a younger far less educated good-old-boy kinda charm. In fact, the Pope has a tall hat that sits high on his head, similar to a tall *KKK* hood, and both the klan and the Pope wear

white or other colorful robes. Both claim to be serving God. The words *Vicarius Filii Dei*, which loosely translated means something like, substituting for the son of God, or God's right hand man, is just a slight bit of grandiosity.

As you probably know, certain Latin letters possess numerical significance: an L is fifty, a D stands for five hundred, a C is one hundred, a X is ten, a V or U (since there is no U in the Latin alphabet) is a five, and the I is one. Consequently, *Vicarius Filii Dei* adds-up to 666. Supposedly those same words, *Vicarius Filii Dei*, translated into certain ancient languages, which also have numerical significance attached to the letters of their alphabet, still totals-up to 666. It's amazing how evil can be so skilled at cloaking itself as goodness, or humans are at finding numerical significance, where in fact there is none. Either way, at minimum, that mathematical phenomenon is mildly interesting.

<http://www.aloha.net/~mikesch/666.htm>

Mr. Purple's little talk was chocked full of veiled subtle depravities, and would have had you believe

that the klan was just a fun loving group of peaceful patriotic gentlemen, but just didn't believe in race mixing, other than at work. It wasn't hard to tell that Mr. Purple was the kind of guy who could quickly ramp-up emotionally, if you disagreed with him. The other klansmen just continued to look solemn. *The guns on their hips must be a sign of good will.* Of course, in the tranquil verdant park; there was the very real danger that at any moment, they could have been attacked by a insane squirrel, or an out of control dive-bombing mockingbird. And of course, the klan wants to be able to protect themselves and blast the ever-loving shit out of such ferocious creatures. It's surprising how people are adept at making their beliefs appear good and reasonable, regardless the harm they inflict.

In general, the Germans are a bright peoples, but obviously too many fell for Hitler's poisonous propaganda. Well, didn't they? Perchance, it was due to Germany's poor economy; but for whatever reason, many good Germans fell for the spin, and all the death and suffering that it generated. Over five million valiant German soldiers died for nothing more than an insane power hungry tyrant, who we now know was a major drug addict, filled with

immeasurable amounts of hate. At times, uncle Adolph seemed caring, even fatherly, but in reality, he was the devil.

Likewise, many Americans now follow that radio guy, Rusty Limp Bough, a drug addict, filled with hate. His hatred seems to be reserved primarily for anyone who's not a right wing conservative, as was Hitler. In Rusty's mind, it seems that anyone, who's not a 'conservative,' is your basic American version of an 'infidel.' Rusty has almost singlehandedly turned the meaning of the words 'liberal and progressive' into 'idiot and infidel.' Likewise, millions of Americans have followed right along with Bush's invasion of Iraq, and the killing of a half a million to a million Iraqis, many of which were women and kids, for free oil, and so that the war industries could get rich, and there's the minor issue of what happened to the massive Iraqi treasury. I'm sure it was used to rebuild Iraq. Aren't you sure? In addition, by removing Saddam Husain, we got the monkey of Saudi Arabia's back. Did you, the reader, do anything to object to that war, that killed hundreds of thousands of innocents, or were you just like those German citizens, who followed Hitler out the door to massive amounts of death and

destruction? Generally, a country's citizens, as well as its' soldiers, believe that their leaders are doing the right thing; especially, when there's the above mentioned side benefits, and the huge number of dead are of another culture. It's a strange perverse type of blind faith.

No corporate or political leader would use their country's brave soldiers to kill people for selfish reasons, would they? They wouldn't high-jack America's finest young soldiers and place them in harm's way, so that they can drive fancy cars, vacation all over the world, sail on huge yachts, enjoy big bank accounts, etc. Would they? They wouldn't have the country's youth risk their lives just so corporations, which make military hardware, could get rich, would they? Sadly, good people are much like sheep, when it comes to following their leaders. All the leader needs is some half baked propaganda, and the promise of a brighter future. And then, there's also the fact that God is on their side. Don't forget to drink the purple *Kool-Aid*, about all those Iraqi weapons of mass destruction. There'll always be someone, who needs to be killing lots of people, on a grand scale, to satisfy their greedy psychopathic gray matter.

For a whole year, I pinched pennies, and a few days ago, I went on a Caribbean cruise with my daughter. One of the stops was in southern Mexico, the town of Progreso. A few miles south of that town, we visited some primitive Mayan Temples in the interior of the Yucatan. The tour guide made the ancient human sacrifices sound like a good thing. He claimed that since the victims were painted sky blue, just before they had their chests cut open, their hearts ripped out, and their heads chopped off, it was really okay. Shockingly, the guide's beliefs actually coincided with those of the ancient Indians. The idea was that, since they were painted sky blue, the slaughtered victims went straight to heaven, hence their deaths were of no consequence. And as mentioned, the tour guide believed in those ancient Mayan beliefs; just as all religious people believe in some ancient beliefs. No doubt, the Sun God was on their side. Oddly enough, many of the Mayans were brilliant people, and some of the world's first true astronomers. Nevertheless, they still followed their crazy priests, just as if they were mindless sheep. In all likelihood, the astronomer Mayans were the geniuses of the group and the other folks followed the priests. Religions are generally easier to understand, than is science. Astrophysics requires a

higher IQ, than reading a religious text.

Painting those people blue, before they were murdered seems reminiscent of the bible story, where the Egyptian first born were sacrificed by God. The rationale might have been that since the Egyptian first born were innocent, they would go straight to heaven anyway, just like the Mayan people, who were painted blue, so their deaths were no big deal. Makes great sense to me. How about you? Just maybe such killing is a tiny portion of the genius of God, far beyond our ability to comprehend, or maybe the killings were just created by an artistic writer, with or without a social or political agenda. Perhaps someone with a bit of schizophrenia came-up with the idea. Certainly a God which can kill babies, or can make you burn forever, fits the criteria for being a farfetched delusional idea, similar to the idea that because some people are smeared in blue vegetable die, they'll go to heaven, when they're violently murdered. Giant iguana lizards were strolling everywhere around the Mayan ruins.

Often the more you study something, the more memories you lay-down about what it is you study, and the more memories a concept is associated with, the more 'real' that concept seems, and the more it is

apt to appear to agree with new incoming experiences/memories. This builds a neuro-reality. And, it's the only reality you'll ever know. The more the studying, the more memories, and the larger the neuro-reality, as new memories come into the brain, you are more apt to see how readily they confirm the validity of the well ingrained memories, so the ingrained memories begin to make more and more sense. It's nothing but brainwashing 101. The more times you read holy passages, the more hymns you sing, the more prayers you pray, the more sermons you listen to, the more like minded people you speak with, etc., the stronger your neuro-reality becomes, and the more certain you become that it's correct.

The circuitry of believing becomes associated with more memories and more ideas, and so, the longer the belief is held, in effect the more powerful it becomes, because the more associations your brain makes. Consequently, anything which seems to disavow said neuro-reality is deemed to be relatively insignificant, psychologically irritating, or just flat-out wrong. The arrival of a new fact which contradicts what's already ingrained in the brain is harder to accept, because it lacks the number of connections, and so the individual is apt to reject it.

Regardless, you can't argue with solid logic like the blue body painting, or God's killing the first born Egyptians, or Hitler's anti-semitic policy of gassing the Jews, or George Bush's justification for killing a half a million to one million Iraqis, or how the Jews now treat the Palestinians, or Mao's purge of millions, or Stalin's, or Pol Pot's, etc. I especially like how big Pharma promotes illness, and discourages medical cures.

The Purple Man in the tent seemed to strike a bolt upright posture, each time he pointed-out that the *KKK* was a Christian organization. I just wanted to scream, "I believe! You're so amazing, Purple Man!" Not really...

At the end of his brief bit of propagandizing, Purple Man asked, "Are there any of you fine people, who would care to ask me something about the *KKK*? Anything you'd like to know. We have absolutely nothing to hide and are happy to answer any and all of your questions. Please feel free to ask. We won't bite. I promise."

He said this, with his rubber band smile awkwardly plastered to his face. After such a stirring presentation, I was certainly feeling all warm and fuzzy. *Where do I sign-up? Just get me my hood and*

gun! Asking the question, Purple Man's arms were widely extended, out toward the small multitude, but with his palms supinated toward heaven. Perhaps, he felt like Moses leading the slaves out of Egypt, or that jewish fellow, Jesus, feeding the masses by the Sea of Galilee, except that all twelve of Mr. Purple's disciples are wearing sidearms, and Jesus probably didn't have that rubber band smile. Worse yet, Jesus was a jew; something Mr. Purple thought of as non-white, rather than a bunch of highly intelligent folks. At the time, I recalled thinking that there weren't many jews in Mobile, but there seemed to be a lot of jewish doctors and lawyers, at least, judging by their surnames.

During his speech, I had figured that there might just be a time at the end for questions, and I'd been trying to prepare a humdinger of a question, for Mr. Purple Man. My question was configured to address any fallacious propaganda, he might have spoon fed the crowd. Judging from various head nods, it appeared some in the crowd were buying into his lies. Before Mr. Purple man had finished his speech, I made sure that my tennis shoe laces were well tied.

Initially, Purple Man's request for questions hung in the stale air for a long ten count, while he

searched our faces; however, no hands were raised. It appeared that no one wanted to be the focus of the klan's scrutiny. As you might imagine, I didn't want to be the first person to ask a question, but since no hands went up, I began to fear that I was going to miss my opportunity. When I raised my hand, once again, the rubber band smile stretched laterally, above Purple Man's white upper incisors. *He has such nice teeth for such a phony smile.* His gaze seemed more like he was sighting in on a target, than outwardly expressing good will. More often than not, I'd rather gaze upon a sincere unfriendly frown, than a sham rubber band smile. Such a poorly forged expression demeans both parties, but especially the recipient, since it assumes he or she believes the smile sincere. Purple Man's smile reminded me of a man's bad hair piece, where the wearer looks like he has a bird's nest atop of his head, and believes he's actually fooling the observers, and the poor observers politely pretend to be fooled, or the nest-wearer might become irate.

Mr. Purple adjusted his stance, elevated his chin, and struck a more intimidating gaze. It was as if he was warning me, or maybe he was bracing for my question, and was expecting trouble. *My shoulder*

length hair has made him weary of me. Disconcertingly, all the armed klansmen in the tent turned their attention away from their leader and fixated on me, yet none drew their pistols. *I gotta ask this, then get outta here, fast.* Not well prepared, I was feeling slightly apprehensive.

“Yes?” Purple man bellowed. “What is it you’d like to know, sonny?”

Why’d he call me ‘sonny,’ he’s about my age? I was about to firmly push the klan’s restrictive boundaries of propriety. During his stirring presentation, I had at first considered enquiring, why they had to wear guns in the downtown park, especially since they didn’t believe in violence. But I figured Mr. Purple already had a canned response for that conspicuous question; so, I had skipped it, and had moved on to finding a more subtle little interrogative, a true shiny golden nugget, a thorny little conundrum. I’d been polishing the question for the last couple of minutes of his illuminating all-American delivery. It was when he said that the klan was the right hand of the Lord that my question materialized, as if it had been jammed into my feeble frontal lobes by the Lord, himself, or herself... creating a moment of clarity. For some reason, the Purple Man’s comment made

me think of the church song, which I'd sung as a child.

Jesus Loves the Little Children

Jesus loves the little children
All the children of the world
Red, brown, yellow
Black and white
They are precious in His sight.
Jesus loves the little children
Of the world.

Jesus died for all the children
All the children of the world
Red, brown, yellow
Black and white
They are precious in His sight.
Jesus died for all the children
Of the world.

Jesus rose for all the children
All the children of the world
Red, brown, yellow
Black and white
They are precious in His sight.

Jesus rose for all the children
Of the world.

Lyrics by C. Herbert Woolston, with the music
by George F. Root

“Sir, would you please tell me, what is the klan’s position on abortion?” I posed that question, doing my best to look truly interested, thereby casting out the hook and line, with the attached wiggling worm.

Since it was a rather unexpected question, most of the audience turned to look at me. Mr. Purple’s eyes widened in stark surprise, then his brow furrowed and he suddenly lost his rubber band smile, indicating that he probably hadn’t anticipated this peculiar query, at least not from a long haired hippie. *Maybe he thinks my girlfriend’s pregnant and I looking for advice.* To his credit and in my favor, he didn’t hesitate in his response; while he noticed the juicy wiggling worm, he failed to see the rusty barbed hook. With full force, the largemouth struck hard at the bait.

“The KKK is a Christian organization, son. We are firmly against any and all types of abortion!” He

declared loudly and proudly, while scanning the crowd, clearly hoping to see their heads nod, their affirmation.

Indeed, heads again began to nod. Then, Mr. Purple was even nodding in agreement with their nodding. *How ridiculous!* This was the answer I was hoping for. He was slow in realizing that he was in uncharted waters. Timing was of the essence, and I needed to move quickly to set the hook.

“Why is that, sir?” I swiftly followed-up, yanking hard on the fishing-pole.

He looked slightly impatience, as if I was becoming something of a nuisance. Yet, I’d done my best to appear to be completely sincere in asking my question. This wasn’t a line of inquiry he was interested in pursuing, but I only needed one last response from his great wealth of klan wisdom to reel him in. *He looks annoyed, as if I’m wasting his time.*

“Because son, every baby, every fetus is created and blessed by the Great Almighty God!” He shouted this and gave me a less than congenial look, followed by a pronounced conformational nod. *I’ve got you now!*

With both of his open palms, the big purple-robed bass pounded on the loud hollow podium. His pounding the podium was meant to silence me. It was designed to indicate that he was done with me. He'd bitten down hard on the hook, and it was time to pull and bury the hook deep in his hateful jaw, then start reeling. Quickly, I snatched hard on the rhetorical fishing pole.

“Well, if that’s true, it would be impossible to exclude the mixed race children! You know... the people, who are half white and half black! They must have been created and blessed by the Great Almighty, just like any other person? Such things are certainly far beyond my grasp.” Finishing-up my brief commentary, I was already shifting my weight from my butt to the balls of my feet, preparing to make a break for the exit, relying on my peripheral vision to accurately locate the open tent flap, and to make sure that no one was in my way. *Thank goodness, I’m on the end of the bleacher.* At the time that I made that statement, I didn’t realize that many years later, my only child, would be a beautiful mixed baby girl, nor that the one day the POTUS would also be of mixed race. In those days, in my wildest dreams, I never would have believed that

Barack H. Obama could become the president, but as the saying goes, ‘wonders never cease.’ President Obama would likely have accomplished most of his presidential goals had he only been white.

In response to my last comments, Mr. Purple appeared to be stuck, the hook was sunk deep into his jaw, and he was ready to be yanked aboard the boat. The rubber band smile was then long gone. His face was rotating through an odd combination of expressions, accompanied by a fair amount of thoughtful blinking.

At first, Mr. Purple only frowned, but then he momentarily looked confident, but he failed to find the words, and began to blink repetitiously. Undoubtedly, Mr. Purple was searching for a face saving answer. When he stopped blinking, he sort of chuckled, and then came the flaring nostrils and a hateful glare, which could have melted steel. Being far too much of a coward to stick around and listen to him fumble and mumble out of his dilemma, or to make some semi-threatening rejoinder, I initiated my exit. I’d decided not to ask Mr. Purple, if the klan would consider supporting the *United Negro College Fund*. That purple fish was fast becoming a toothy shark, so I opted to cut the line.

I wondered what he could possibly have said in response to my comment? “Even God makes mistakes? God doesn’t always know what he’s doing? Sometimes things just aren’t that simple! Or perhaps the all time favorite...God works in mysterious ways.” *The truth is he doesn’t believe in God; of course, neither do I.* Throughout my life I’ve been off and on about the God thing; still, if there is a God, I doubt he remotely resembles anything what can be found in any of the religious texts. Mr. Purple looked crimson, but remained speechless, right in front of that small group of Mobile’s local yokels, and I was feeling the need to bolt from the mildewed tent, yet it was hard not to just continue to watch his face, which began to contort into something lacking symmetry.

His jaw muscles tightened, while his nostrils twitch and repeatedly flared, and then only his right nostril briefly jerked upward, while both lips pulled hard to the right, and his right eye half closed. His head began a repetitious nodding motion. For some reason, he glanced at the guard to his right, then the armed guard gave me a contemptuous sneer. So when Mr. KKK turned back to look at me, I’d already grabbed the yellow and black ejection handle and pulled. Rolling my left wrist to fake check my watch,

I pivoted off the end of the bleacher, while saying, “Thank you, sir. I enjoyed your stirring presentation. But, I’m gonna be late to a dental appointment. Bye!”

The last word passed my lips, as I shot out the entrance. In those days, I was a good amateur runner, and there was no way any guy wearing a giant white sheet was going to catch me. Later, I thought how my reference to a dental appointment, wasn’t such a good idea. Had they somehow caught me, or later found me, I’m sure I might have needed a dentist, or a complete set of dentures.

Even though it has been done for thousands of years, I’ve never understood the concept of one’s body being pumped full of chemicals, nailed into a box, and jammed under six feet dirt. What for? Just dig the hole and throw my dead body in... no chemicals, no box, no headstone, and no ceremony. Recycle the body’s chemicals, as soon as possible, or just cremate me. Embalming fluid can’t be good for any community’s aquifer. Every year in the United States, nearly nine hundred thousand gallons of embalming fluids go into the ground. I wonder if anyone has ever done a study on the effect of graveyards on drinking water? America’s tap water is bad enough, as it is. On the other hand, I do like the

idea of being put in the nose-cone of a rocket and launched into the sun, to be converted into numerous photons, neutrinos, beta and alpha particles, etc., to then be scattered out across the universe, whatever that actually is!

Feeling the disagreeable pressure from Mr. Purple, I broke from the tent, and sprinted, watching the exactness of each foot placement. Trouble felt but a few second away, as I ran across the grassy field, having waved a friendly goodbye to Mr. Crewcut, who was still standing guard outside the tent. Mr. Crew-cut had been right about the meeting being for those, who were seeking the truth. Visions of burning crosses played in my head, as the soles of my feet danced across the ground. Once onto a city street, and out of their line-of-sight, I cut down a side street. A block later, I turned another corner, and took a very indirect route to my car. Several times, I looked over my shoulder to make sure I wasn't being followed. The air was fresh outside the tent... no more sickening mildew.

That wasn't to be my last encounter with the notorious *KKK*. But it was the only one, where they had willingly acknowledged themselves, at least in my presence. As mentioned, years later, I'd watch a

klansman murder two young black men, and I'd witness a sweet older black lady brought into a small town Alabama courtroom, literally bound hand-and-foot, by ancient rusty chains, with links the size of small lemons. She was sick and desperately hungry, having been locked-away, for days, in an unheated freezing cold cell, and barely fed, for 'supposedly' having run a stop sign. The real reason she was abused is that she had prevailed in a lawsuit, against a wealthy klansman, a renowned Mobile slumlord. Her unusual story appears later in the last book of this series, in the chapter entitled, *In Chains*.

The town where that injustice had occurred, and where such cruelty may still be happening, is a minor hub for the *KKK* in the state of Alabama. Her rich slumlord had inflicted a grievous injustice against the black woman's son, framing him for a vandalism. Moreover, he'd done his level best to use and abuse several of her black neighbors. While he hated black people, in general, he still loved to have sex with beautiful young black women. The slumlord klansman accomplished this not by courtship, but by threat of eviction, or worse.

The older black lady had taken him to civil court and walked away with a \$50,000 settlement, so the

klansman, sought vengeance, with the help of his fellow klansmen, a cop and a judge. Since the day I went to that klan meeting, I never again have seen the klan wearing sidearms in public, not even on the TV news, but you can bet the *KKK* has more than its share of *NRA* members, and many are highly skilled in the use of firearms.

Today, there's an extremely old city in the Northwest Florida, where a bust of Dr. Martin Luther King sits upon a truncated four foot pedestal, on the median-strip of one of the downtown streets. Dr. King is facing North, and four blocks to the North, in the middle of the same straight street, is granite statue of a confederate soldier on a twenty-five foot granite pedestal, looking south at Dr. King. After the King monument was erected, for a couple of years, the two men continually stared at each other, until some trees grew-up in between them and blocked their respective views. Until time or something destroys or removes those statues, they will most likely continue to gaze at each other. Perhaps one day, someone will figure a way to break that age-old staring contest. Honestly, I can't see how the country allows those confederate statutes to remain. After all, they more or less stand in support of slavery. We

need to get rid of all symbols of racism and slavery. While indeed they are part of history, some histories are best not honored. Why don't we build statues to mass murders? After all, they're part of our history.

Why have we built so many monuments to America's southern traitors, for there is no doubt that the confederates were traitors to the United States of America? And even if you think that the South was justified in starting that horribly bloody war, due to economic pressures, what about the slavery? And what does it say to American blacks that we allow those confederate statues to stand? It doesn't take much intelligence to realize that such monuments are a painful slap in their faces. I say let's get rid of those ugly monuments, since a present day peaceful society is more important, than any piece of granite or bronze. Perhaps, it will be mother nature, who solves the age old problem, and one day, there will be no more pure black people, nor extremely pale white people, just a bunch of mixed people.

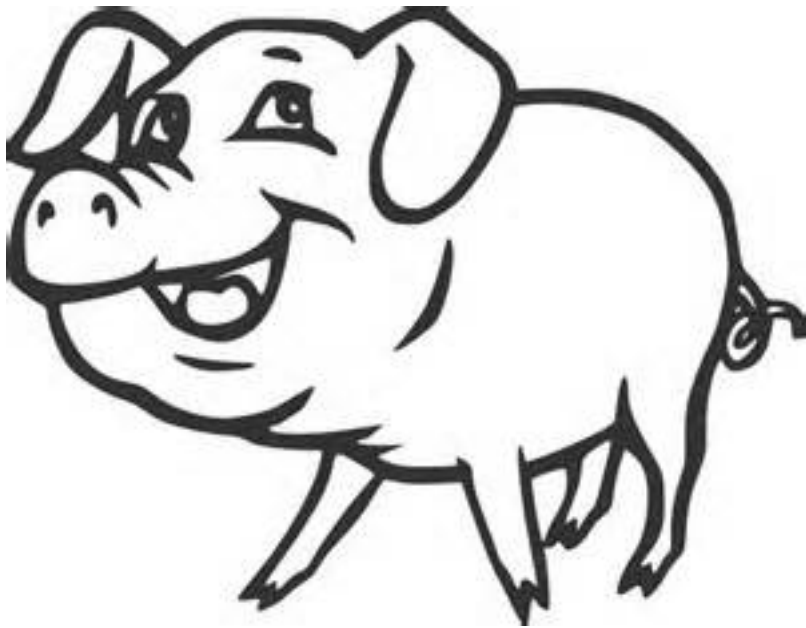
Oh, I wish I was in the land of cotton,
Old times there are not forgotten.
Look away, look away, look away Dixie Land!
In Dixie's Land, where I was born in,

early on one frosty mornin'.

Look away, look away, look away Dixie Land!....

-Most sources credit Daniel Decatur Emmett, with the song's creation, others have claimed to have composed “Dixie,” even during Emmett's lifetime.





PIG

Early in my married life, I worked a hectic little job for the local Mobile rag, the *Mobile News Register*. My position was ‘district manager.’ It was a nearly impossible occupation, requiring that I supervise no less than twenty black paperboys, ranging in age from nine to fourteen. Managing the twenty children was a juggling act of immense proportions, yet to gain and maintain the trust of the twenty young black boys was a gratifying privilege. At times, they

ran me ragged, but I loved those kids dearly. They were all poor and poorly educated, yet they saw beauty, humor, and love, while living in Mobile's slums. The job was a lesson in humility and a glimpse at the subtle and not so subtle, effects of poverty. If you don't love children, and enjoy working to help them, to gain their trust and respect, then perhaps you're wanting. That was probably the only part of my goopy gray, which was remotely reminiscent of empathy, at that point in my life. Being in charge of twenty energetic black paperboys redefined the concept of multitasking, but in those youthful days, I had the energy; at least, when I had managed to get some sleep.

The work was exhausting, high paced, with long hours and low pay. The paperboys were nothing short of amazing, if not flat-out magnificent. They were quick with a joke, or to relate a juicy piece of humorous gossip, and the kids were highly prone to sudden involuntary zig-zag paroxysms of the head, often followed by seemingly spontaneous outbursts of dance, whenever certain types of music popped on the car radio. For most of my paperboys, music automatically triggered movement! Whoever said black people can't dance? The boys radiated with a

spirit of goodwill. While they were generally filthy, and prone to petty theft, their young hearts were indisputably pure.

Every gun that is made, every warship launched, every rocket fired, signifies in the final sense a theft from those who hunger and are not fed, those who are cold and are not clothed.

Dwight D. Eisenhower

They gave me their trust, because over time, they came to realize they could, and so it was a privilege to be their friend, and boss. If your life feels unfulfilled, go find some poor kids and give them a hand, just don't be too quick to judge. If those things don't make sense to you, then you may never have really understood innocence in the face of poverty. Oh certainly, the kids had their flaws, but no one is candidly guiltless, especially me... maybe, not even you. Look at how the mega rich have ruined so many lives in their quest for wealth beyond reason, hordes of useless unused rotting sinking wealth, never to be used for the slightest amount good, never to be used for anything. The success of my relationship with those indigent astonishing kids boiled down to

mutual respect. To this day, I remain impressed with their abilities to deal with hardship. Each of them was far tougher than I could ever hope to be. You either admire such, or jealousy turns you sour, and you turn to racism.

Plan B

Kidnap the President's wife without a plan
Kidnap the President's wife without a plan
Yeah, I got a plan
It's etched with a knife in the center of my hand
So I guess I'm gonna have to keep my fist clenched
Walk around DC in the rain 'til my wares is drenched
Wait for that motherfucker to take out the garbage
Do a press conference about what great shape this country in
And when them welfare cuts gonna begin
And when he pat his dog and kiss his wife goodbye
That's when I move in
I throw that silly ho in a headlock
I muffle her grill so her screams stop
I whisper to her, "Your man ain't here to protect you, baby. He gone."
I dial up my nigga, O-North
Tell him to meet me with the Caddy on the white lawn
I toss her in the backseat

Cover her head with a black sheet
Put the steel in her grill piece
Be like, "If you don't shut up, I'll gonna do shots off
in your dome piece."
Watch her have fits
If she don't understand I'm gonna give her a quick
lesson in Ebonics
"I'm a shoot you, baby."
I take her to my hideout in the low income houses
down the street
I replace her Joan and Davis with purple Reeboks on
her feet
I give her 4 hungry kids, no job, no ambition
No family support and a last welfare check
I give her crappy ass Medicaid and a ill type of
growth growing out the side of her neck
I tell her, "Fend for yourself. Keep you in them
shorties and proper health."
After sufficient time on that hype
I'll introduce her to the crack pipe
Yeah, I'll let her feel its soothing effects
As she tries to forget about the absence of them
checks
I'll make her sell her jewels for it
I make her pay the dues for it
And then I'll come to her late at night
And I'll be like, "Yo, everything ain't gonna be all
right.
You ain't gonna be able to go quietly in that good
night
Peace ain't gonna come "til your death be done."

And then I'll lead her up to the roof
And I'll show her all the shit she don't own
I'll lead her over to the edge
And leave her there all alone.

Poem from season one, episode 7 of the TV
series "Oz"

Nothing destroys someone's future like welfare and crappy jobs. We need to slowly phase-out about ninety percent of welfare, but only when there are available jobs, which actually allow people to survive and prosper. My district manager job paid exactly twenty-five cents, above what was then the minimum wage, a whopping \$2.15 per hour, as opposed to the basic \$1.90. Even with a recently awarded meager BS in biology, from the University of Southern Alabama, this was the best employment, I could manage in Mobile, the Death Valley of employment, the vacuum of education, the unwashed armpit of culture, but the Mecca of pure racial prejudice. Four years of college for an extra twenty-five cents an hour... such bargain! Worse yet, I had a house note to pay, and a wife who loved antiques and marijuana. She loved smoking weed, to the point that often I'd fake hitting the joint, for as strange as it may seem, I prefer unpolluted neurochemistry, more than I do being

stoned. Nevertheless, it should be a crime to arrest people for using or selling weed. It's sort of like beating a child because they didn't make their bed.

Those twenty kids never really had a chance. It's nice to think, that with hard work, the American dream will prevail, but not everyone is born with a piss-pot of money like Donald Trump. But unlike Donald those poor kids didn't complain and whine. They lived for each other, not for their own self glorification. Where wealth turned our presidential candidate, Donald, into a defensive whiner, who brags about his near nonexistent intellect and education, the kids made the most of their poverty, in that they loved people. In many ways, Hillary and Donald are peas in a pod. My bet is that if Donald becomes president, he'll not divulge his taxes. On the other hand, something tells me that he's not nearly as rich as he likes to lead people to believe.

The intellectual imagination! With me all or not at all. NON SERVIAM!

James Joyce's, *Ulysses*.

Imagination is certainly not something to be

controlled by those without it, though they will never get tired of trying to do just that; in fact, in the business world, it's the norm. Nothing destroys imagination quite like control. Nothing spoils a great hallucination faster, than trying to control it.

In those days, and if you were black and poor, life was the often dangerously oppressive, if not deadly, and death came by law enforcement. As stated, most of the cops were *KKK* members. And today, even if they're not *KKK*, most of the cops I know use the 'N' word, when referring to blacks. Though it's nice to think otherwise, too often poverty mandates dealing drugs, a corresponding felony record, as is crappy food, toxic water, low quality schools, crippling welfare, etc.

Early each morning and afternoon, it was my duty to make sure that thousands of the boring right-wing newspapers were dispatched, throughout my left-wing district, except on Sundays, when there was only the one ultra thick edition, filled with the advertising inserts, and free coupons. Because of those profitable coupons, many people only subscribed to the Sunday edition. I was in charge of district seven, the largely all-black section of Mobile. In my district, there were six newspaper bundle

drops, where hundreds of bundles of papers were left, usually right out on a section of sidewalk, or up against some abandoned building, or in some unused parking lot. Those bundle-drop deliveries were carried-out by large white courier vans. On rainy days, sheets of clear plastic were thrown over the bundles, which my paperboys would climb under to roll their newspapers, put them in narrow plastic bags, with a rubber band around each, pile them in their bicycle baskets and in waterproof sacs, they wore over their shoulders, then they'd skillfully fling the papers at their customers' homes as they pedaled or walked along. The paper would usually land somewhere close to the front door, but for those less than congenial customers, the paper might land in places such as: a bush or tree, the roof, under the car, or on or close to a steaming pile of dog poop. Targeting a pile of poop, required the zen of newspaper throwing, and many of my paperboys were zen masters. We all agreed that to reach the zen of newspaper throwing required a minimum of ten thousand paper throws. If you had a hundred customers, you had to throw about four months, to accurately hit targets with a folded newspaper.

If something happened to one of my twenty kids

(an upset stomach, a cold, a hangover, fatigue, beaten-up in a fight, getting arrested, etc.), I'd lend them a hand. Frequently, attempting to keep them working was a matter of such things as: taking them to the doctor, bringing them medicine, taking them to get something to eat, locating whose porch they were sleeping on or under, bailing them out, driving their route with them to throw their papers, repairing a bicycle (usually fixing flats), testifying before a juvenile judge, explaining to the paperboys how to avoid legal issues, etc., but occasionally things could be serious.

Most of the paperboys sported colorful nicknames: nunchucks, tooth, reach, pie, dirty Jay, TT, foot, etc. One of the kids had the inglorious nickname of 'Pig.' They could possess the strangest of nicknames, which might seem demeaning to most whites kids, but which the black kids never considered degrading. A name which white kids would have unmercifully used to belittle, black kids would use with a sense of deference.

Pig was highly respected by his peers, and especially by me. Unlike his name sake, he was a lean muscular extremely active twelve-year-old. He was awarded the moniker, because pound for pound,

he could eat more food than anyone on planet earth, yet he never gained an ounce of fat. When he grew-up, he became a well known boxer, an unmerciful light heavyweight, with a record of 22 wins and 3 losses, and the three losses were close decisions, to which Pig took great exception.

Early each dark morning, when starting work, the first paperboy I looked for was Pig, because he had an uncanny, almost psychic ability, to locate each of the other nineteen paperboys; ergo, Pig was invaluable. Without Pig, many mornings I'd have never managed to find, certain paperboys, so I could motivate them to throw their paper routes. Pig was also talented when it came to rolling bones. Almost all my dear paperboys carried dice and shot craps in their spare time. Since they were usually broke, they'd shoot for things such as rubber bands, or helping each other to throw their route. If they didn't have any dice, they threw pennies against the wall; anything to beat back the boredom of poverty.

Late one afternoon, the ninety pound Pig was walking home exhausted, after a long day trudging around his entire two hundred-customer route. Not only had he delivered his papers, but he'd been collecting his monthly route money. Many of his

customers were notoriously cranky and less than dependable. Some of that collection money was his, but most of what he'd collected had to be given to me, so I could then give it to the *Mobile News Register*, thereby paying for Pig's monthly allotment of newspapers. The *Mobile News Register* really didn't need this collection money, since the vast majority of their profit came from selling advertising. Had the paperboys been allowed to keep that money, they might have been able to barely escape their poverty, but then they knew little to nothing about saving or investing.

Pig was nearly home one evening, tired, sweaty, and with his front pockets bulging with over three hundred dollars in mostly ones and fives, when two large well muscled black teenage males stepped-out from between two houses, stopped him in the street, and demanded that Pig handover his collection money. They probably had been following him, watching him collect from his newspaper customers.

The twelve year old Pig was a lion hearted boy, with courage like a decorated combat vet. But even with his fearlessness, the little twelve year old was no match for the much larger older black male teens. Pig was simply too small to effectively deal with the

two sizable teens, and he was almost smart enough to realize that, but the fear of poverty made him too brave. The two big teens had first approached Pig in a casual friendly fashion, then they braced him, and made their demand.

“We been watch’n you collect’n all that green, little nigga. Now, give up the fuck’n money, or you be get’n one badass whip’n! Just give it up, and you be okay. Give it up, little boy! Ya hear? Ain’t gonna be no problem, if’n you just give up de money, so let’s have it! Dump it out ah dem pockets, now, little nigga.”

Pig had likely known that he couldn’t handle the two muscular robbers, and should have simply handed-over his collection money. However, according to a couple of elderly black men, who’d witnessed the encounter, Pig only shrugged, pretending he was going to comply with their demand, but instead he abruptly turned and made a dash for freedom, sprinting for all he was worth, but a few strides later, the two quick young men overtook Pig, then one of them delivered a swift hard fist to the back of Pig’s head, which sent the twelve year old sprawling face-down onto the crumbling asphalt. Neither of the two snowy haired ebony men,

could step-in too help; they were simply too old. One was in a wheelchair and should have been in a nursing home. But, that's a luxury ill-afforded by the financially destitute, even today. Black nursing homes were few and far between, often malodorous, and almost always a miasma of health and safety violations. More empathy was extended to the dogs in the pound, than to the residents of those black nursing homes.

The two adolescent thieves hadn't anticipated Pig's iron resolve. A second after the blow, the small twelve year old began struggling to get to his feet.

"I ain't gonna tell you again, little nigga. Give us the fuck'n money, or we'll give you a fucking beat'n you ain't never gonna forget." The two black teens truthfully threatened the small boy.

Pig nodded his head in apparent compliance, while he began to stand back up. As he rose, Pig leaped forward, and used the momentum to throw a wide looping right hook, smashing the larger of the two teens in the mouth, but the other teen was not surprised, and immediately punched Pig in the side of his face and Pig was again back down to the hard roadway, then both the teens proceeded to repeatedly kick him. Pig rolled-up in a ball, with his

right side on the asphalt, and his chin tucked, as he tightly clutched his collection money in his front pants pockets.

The two older teens repeatedly punched, kicked, and stomped the poor Pig, while constantly yelling at him to give-up his hard-earned cash. During their efforts to dislodge the money, the resolute little Pig remained balled-up and maintained an unflagging grip on his pockets. Having initially failed to steal the money, the shorter stronger robber began to repeatedly lift Pig up off the street, over his head, and body-slam him, hard down onto the unforgiving blacktop. Throughout the vicious beating, the tenacious little Pig refused to give up his grip on the cash. One of the robbers could simply have penned his arms and the other sat on his legs and wrestled the money out of Pig's pockets, but the two sadistic teens were more content with beating Pig and breaking his resolute determination. They wanted Pig to voluntarily bend to their will, more than they wanted the money. According to the two senior witnesses, the money seemed to be a lesser motivation for the vicious teen's actions, but for Pig, the money was life, itself, and so Pig's spirit remained unbroken.

“Those two young men seemed mo interested in hurt’n dat little boy, then get’n dat money.” One of the elderly witnesses, later told me.

Suddenly, one of the robbers grabbed Pig by the throat, to try to choke him into releasing the money. But somehow Pig managed to tuck his chin, and sink his teeth deep into the robber’s wrist. The robber snatched his hand back to examine the bite, and Pig took the moment to try to get up, and he straightened out his legs, and ran, but simultaneously the bitten teen cut straight to the chase, pulled a long folding knife from his pocket, opened it. Pig tried to scoot away from the knife, as the teen faked a jab, as if he was going to stab Pig in the face, that caused Pig to raise his arms and momentarily look away. The robber then used the opportunity to swiftly and forcefully sweep Pig’s legs out from under him, and once again, Pig was down on the asphalt. Suddenly the bitten robber was on him, and without any hesitation stabbed the supine Pig, clean through his thin left thigh, The point of the knife went completely through the thigh. The knife point came out the back of Pig’s thigh, and bit into the roadway, causing the side of the robber’s hand to momentarily lose its grip, so that the robber had to again grasp the

knife's handle to extract the blade. Pig's head flew back and he let out with a pitiful scream, where upon the other mugger snatched all the cash from Pig's pockets, and Pig no longer resisted. His will had been broken.

Fortunately, the knife had missed bone, nerve, and artery, but as mentioned, Pig was thin enough, that the long narrow blade easily passed all the way through, creating two wounds: one entrance and one exit. The robber wiped the blade on his jeans, folded it closed, and returned it to his pocket. There was no need to have stabbed Pig; the robber had overreacted to Pig's bite.

"I told you little nigga! Ya didn't listen! I told you, stupid!" The knife wielding robber screamed at Pig.

Pig was sitting holding his wounded thigh, then Pig received a swift kick in his throat. At that point, one of the old men finally yelled-out from his dark screened porch.

"That's enough! You two are kill'n that boy! You killing him! Go on, now! I done called the police (a bluff)! They be com'n, any second! Let the child be! The police gonna put ya'll in jail, if'n you don't get

outta here. Ya gots the money, so go, now! Get!”

The old man’s comments did the trick, and the brutal attack on Pig momentarily halted. The older of the two thugs repeatedly reached in Pig’s bulging pockets, removing all the cash. Before the two thieves ran-off, Pig received two more swift kicks: one to his lower back, causing Pig to role, which set him up for one last kick to the mouth. Those blows were simply to satisfy a sadist piece of gray matter; after all, who gets off on kicking an already beaten, stabbed, and robbed little twelve year old? Only a true sadist...

After the two thugs had ran off, one of the two elderly disabled black men, phoned the operator, whom contacted the hospital to send an ambulance and the police. Then the old man used his wobbly wheelchair to make his way out into the street, to stay with the injured Pig, until help arrived. The old man slid out of his chair, to lay on the road next to Pig, where he took off his undershirt, and tied it tightly around Pig’s bleeding thigh, repeatedly the old fellow told Pig that he was going to be alright. After that kindness, Pig looked-out for the old guy, at least until Pig died.

An ambulance attendant helped the shirtless old

black man back into his wheelchair, and wheeled him back into his dilapidated three room house. It was this same older gentleman, who would describe the attack to me. Upon learning about Pig's fate, I went to Baptist hospital, the same hospital in which my daughter would be born, twenty years later. Pig was sleeping, but Pig's brother, who was visiting in Pig's room, later took me to meet the two old men, who'd witnessed the attack.

Pig looked so weak and pathetic, laying in that hospital bed. The first thing I noticed were the two black eyes. His nose had been broken, from being hit and kicked in the face. Gauze protruded from his nostrils, and a single piece of adhesive tape, covering the openings, held the two pieces of gauze in place, forcing Pig to have to breathe through his mouth, which enabled me to see that one canine tooth was broken-off level with the neighboring teeth, no doubt from that swift kick to the mouth. One side of his upper lip, looked swollen like a purplish red sausage. One ear was swollen with a deep gash in its' cartilage, then half covered by a square awkward-looking bandage. Pig had difficulty breathing and talking, from having been kicked in the throat, and having four broken ribs. His entire body looked to be

a mass of bruises, and since Pig was of a light caramel complexion, the bruises stood-out starkly. As the days passed, the bruises changed from blue and red, to a sickly green and yellow.

Pig's efforts to swallow water were plainly painful. He had blood in his urine, probably from where he'd been kicked in the left kidney. Two small latex drains protruded from his injured thigh, one from each side, where the knife had entered and existed. There were two folded pillows, under his knee, so the posterior drain wasn't pressed against the bed, and it instead drained into a small curved white metal pan. An antibiotic and glucose drip ran into his veins. Pig's silent mother sat in a chair in the corner of the room, looking markedly worried and tired. She immediately stopped her knitting to glare at me, since I represented the newspaper, and it was the newspaper's money, which had been at the root of the evil, inflicted upon her child. I couldn't attempt to fault the mother for her misplaced anger. At least, Pig's bother didn't fault me.

Pig had very nearly died, desperately trying to protect his precious paper route money. That first visit, I just offered my sympathy, plenty of positive encouragement about his recovery, lies about how

well he looked, and an honest promise to soon return. The morphine rendered Pig fairly unresponsive, but I think he was listening. Accompanied by Pig's brother, I went to go speak with the two old men, but they weren't at home right then. The next day, when I did find them at home, and found out that the police hadn't bothered to interview the old men. After all, the attack only involved black people. One cop showed-up at the hospital room to ask Pig to describe the attackers, took a few notes, then left. That one appearance at Pig's hospital room was the totality of the police investigation. Black kids couldn't count on protection or justice from the Mobile legal system, and still can't... for many police, black lives generally didn't matter. To some extent black lives represented a place to vent hatred and sadism.

Later that evening, I talked with the newspaper's distribution supervisor, to ask him to persuade the newspaper accounting office not to charge Pig for the stolen collection money. After significant persuasion, the *Mobile News Register* begrudgingly, but in their mind, magnanimously wrote it off. In their strange minds, they acted as if they'd really done something huge for the injured kid. Corporations are generally

that way. Of course, they never visited the hospital, and advised me to stay clear of Pig and Pig's family, because of possible liability issues for the newspaper. Back then, my supervisor, a very decent man, shocked me, by taking the legally propitious, yet uncaring, position. Of course, he didn't want to lose his job.

“Joey, you know the boy get'n beat and stabbed like that is a bad thing, but it's sure not the newspaper's fault. Is it? Unfortunately, family members can act strange about this sort of thing. They'll want to sue, whoever they can. So it's best to just steer clear of the kid and his family, to avoid any trouble, Joey. You understand, don't you?” *Not really!*

“Don't worry, Sir. I understand.” Politically dodging the truth.

So that Pig wouldn't lose his newspaper route, the other paperboys and I threw and collected Pig's route for the next three months. Since the supervisor and the bundle drop guys didn't know one black kid from another, Pig eventually got his newspaper route back. After he returned, he just used his ten year old brother's name.

I'd drop by the hospital each day to take Pig some food and drink. Of course, the hospital provided food, and his mom brought food, but as mentioned, the thin little Pig could always eat. While he'd slowly chew and painfully swallow, I'd just sit there and keep him company, talking about all the scuttlebutt concerning the various newspaper customers and the paperboys. For the first few days, due to his difficulty in speaking, I'd ask questions, which only required only a yes or no answer. Pig would hold-up one finger for 'yes,' and two crossed fingers for 'no.' Pig was thrilled about his comfortable hospital bed. All he had at home was a grungy extremely thin worn-out gray bare mattress, and a paper thin pillow. Both the mattress and pillow at his house were always slightly moist, due to Pig's sweating, and the air's high humidity.

After eleven days in the hospital, the drains were removed, and Pig was taken home. Each day, I'd go by his house to take him food and drink. Sometimes, I'd bring hydrogen-peroxide and sealed bandages from the drugstore, to change his dirty dressing. After cleaning the wound, I'd lightly smear a smidgen of zinc oxide on the inside of the fresh dressing, and make sure he took his antibiotics. I yet recall how

weak and fragile Pig looked, laying in the hospital and then even at home, on his small thin bare mattress, and thin little pillow, using a well worn thin cotton blanket for his covers... no sheets, no pillowcase. The severe beating had markedly changed the boy, and may have something to do with how Pig died twelve years later.

Large lumbering brown palmetto bugs (big roaches) occasionally patrolled the corners and cervices of his room. It wasn't that his mom didn't keep the house clean, the palmetto bugs were inevitable, since the house was caressed on all side by massive oaks, the favorite habitant of those bugs... In Mobile, oak trees and palmetto bugs are inseparable. It's as if the bugs are born from the tree. While the bugs can carry disease, they tend to avoid humans, and even if they bite, they rarely can penetrate the skin. My daughter is terrified of the harmless creatures.

It was indeed impressive how quickly his body recovered, and how his personality had so starkly transformed. The once happy-go-lucky Pig laid there, while thoughts of revenge, roamed the folds of his twelve year old cortex, no smile graced his face. As he approached the end of his recovery, I became

mindful that the Pig, I'd once known, no longer existed; a psychological metamorphosis had occurred, and I found myself missing the carefree child. That vicious bloody attack had permanently changed Pig, into a more serious, if not deadly, man-child. Pig's childhood had literally been beaten and stabbed right out of him, leaving him overly focused on revenge. As trite as it may sound, violence can beget violence, just ask certain modern day Israelis. Hitler murdered six and one half million jews, and so now some of the remaining jews seem to be taking their reprisal out on the ill-equipped (military-wise) Palestinians. Have they become like Hitler?

Circa the fourth week of my visits to his home, Pig surprised me. That afternoon, I'd brought him a pulled-pork sandwich, along with a pile of greasy french fries, on a flimsy paper plate covered by a clingy piece of transparent cellophane to keep the blue-bottle flies off. (Instead of the Northern Flicker, the blue fly should be the state bird of Alabama.) The newly opened *Coastline Deli* would prepare takeout food in that fashion, since there were no styrofoam to-go containers, back then. Now days, like plastic, styrofoam (polystyrene) is used almost everywhere. It's the fifth biggest source of hazardous waste in the

US. The stuff is made of benzene and styrene, both known carcinogens, and as if that isn't bad enough, the production of styrofoam is energy intensive and creates massive amounts of greenhouse gases... just what the earth needs more of.

<http://www.matweb.com/reference/Manufacturers.aspx?MatGroupID=22>

<https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Styrofoam>

During that visit, Pig waited, until he had finished eating, and when he was sure we were alone in the house, he shifted his weight to the far edge of the thin mattress, then asked me to reach underneath it, where he'd been laying. Reaching beneath the mattress, I felt around and pulled-out a well-worn .32 caliber six shot revolver. It was an old fashioned lemon-squeezer, an American classic, usually considered to be a woman's pistol. There was no telling how old it was, but I'd guess it was made in the 1930s. A diamond shape was embossed into the center of each of the black bakelite grips, on either side of the gun's handle. First, I opened the cylinder, removed the new shiny shells, closed it, cocked it,

and dry fired it a few times. It seemed to work perfectly.

So much of the weapon's bluing was gone, that the pistol possessed more of a light grayish-purple finish, but nevertheless, there was no rust. Again, opening the cylinder, I placed a piece of my white T-shirt in the open chamber and looked down the barrel's muzzle. The walls of the barrel and the rifling were still smooth and not pitted, indicating that the revolver was probably safe to fire. This made me momentarily remember the old shotguns the farmers had been using in the woods, adjacent to the pigeon shoots, in poverty stricken southern Spain. Supposedly, Pig's ten year old brother had stolen the pistol from an elderly black female alcoholic, a once famous nightclub singer, who lived somewhere nearby. The woman would later replace that stolen pistol with a much larger one. Since she stayed drunk, she probably didn't even know the pistol had been stolen for quite some time, or perhaps the serious lady drunk had just thought she'd misplaced it. The little boy had given the gun to the twelve year-old Pig, so he could protect himself, when doing his newspaper collections. Soon, I'd learn, Pig had a sinister purpose for the antique handgun.

When I mentioned that the gun had new bullets, Pig told me that his brother had stolen a box of fifty bullets from the corner *Penny's Hardware Store*, on Pace Street Boulevard. The ten year old had gone in the back of the store to use the restroom, wadded-up and place a bunch of toilet paper in the trash can, along with a few already smoked cigarette butts, then lit it on fire, and walked out of the bathroom and into the store. When the clerk saw the smoke and ran to the back, Pig's brother snatched the box of .32 caliber bullets, and ducked out.

Lastly, I shook the gun back and forth to determine if the mechanics were loose; but, the old weapon seemed fairly clean and tight. The holes in the cylinder nicely lined-up with the barrel. It was from a bygone era, but it was in good working order. Having inspected the gun, I showed Pig the basics how: to cock the weapon, to sight and fire, gradually and smoothly depressing the trigger, rather than jerking it, controlling one's breathing, etc. I stressed a few safety tips, and lastly, gave instructions on how to clean the weapon. I showed him how he could practice his aim and pulling the trigger, while laying in bed. It's a simple technique. Without using the sights you simply point the gun at randomly selected

targets, then you position just your head to see if the sights line-up. After a while, you can hit targets, without using the sights.

“All you got to do is to quickly point the weapon at some target, like that lamp or where the corner meets the ceiling. Then look down the sights to see if you’re on target. After a while, you can just point and fire, without having to take the time to actually use the sights.”

Once finished with the instructions, I took my shirt off and used it to carefully wipe my prints off each bullet, as well as from all parts of the gun, then using my shirt like a glove to cover my finger prints, I reloaded the weapon, and replaced the gun under his mattress, then put my shirt back on. In those days, you didn’t have to worry about fibers, skin cells (DNA), or microbial analysis. One good thing about a revolver is that, unlike an automatic, it doesn’t leave shell casings at the crime scene, for the police to find. I worried whether the new bullets were not too powerful for the old gun, but was mentioned, the bore was not pitted, nor was the barrel too thin walled. Besides, a .32 caliber isn’t a high powered round, nonetheless, it can be deadly, if it should strike the brain, the heart, or sever a major artery.

Pig hadn't shown me the gun, because he was looking for my approval; quite the contrary. His mind was firmly settled on revenge. This caused me to recall that I had told the paperboys, including Pig, about the time my friends and I had pushed the Spanish guard off the cliff. And, that may have played into Pig's retaliation, and his corresponding assumption, that I would agree with his plan. Indeed, you have to be careful what you tell a child. In a later conversation, Pig would say he was simply looking for guidance on how to carry-out the deed... how to do it, as well as how to not to get caught. Regardless of what I said against his proposed mission, Pig was hell-bent on revenge; but again, I wrongly assumed that Pig's anger was too hot to last, and that after a few more days, he'd forget about pursuing vengeance.

“Whoso would be a man must be a nonconformist.”

Ralph Waldo Emerson, *Self-reliance and Other Essays*

While Emerson generalizes a bit too much, there

is some truth to the sentence. And like I said, Pig was no longer conforming to childhood. Biologically, he certainly was twelve, but because of the vicious attack, psychologically Pig had advanced a couple of decades. During his recovery, I often recalled my Dad's advice about the importance of killing people, who were ruining your life. Needless to say, I had taken my Dad's advice to heart, and had I been in Pig's situation, I think I probably would have killed the two young men. In an odd way, little Pig's fearlessness, reminded me of my Dad. Consequently, I remained ambivalent about Pig's desire for reprisal.

Truth be told, I never actually thought Pig would find his two attackers, or that if he did, he would carry-out his plan for revenge. The two old men, who'd witnessed the attack had said they'd never seen the two teens before that day. I also didn't think Pig would do it, since he was only twelve, and had never even fired a gun. A few weeks later, I found-out from his older brother, that Pig had been going to the woods, north of town, and had been practicing, by shooting the trunks of pine trees, and that afterwards he had cleaned the gun, just as I'd instructed him. The brother was okay with Pig's plan and had stolen three more boxes of ammo, for Pig's

target practice. That time, the brother had one of his friends enter the hardware store and pretend he was trying to shoplift, so the storeowner's attention was distracted, while Pig's brother stealthily grabbed the three additional boxes of ammo. Pig had later stolen a gun cleaning rod from the garage of one of his former newspaper subscribers.

For three months, Pig searched the city high and low, from one end to the other, for the two teens, who'd mugged him. He'd borrowed a bike and pedaled everywhere, even all around Prichard, an all black township, adjoining Mobile. He talked to just about every black kid and black teenager in Mobile, as well as in the surrounding suburbs. He carried-out his diligent search, without ever divulging his true intentions. Pig would describe the two teens, and when people would ask why he was looking for them, Pig would say that he'd heard that they had a particular type of bicycle for sale, and he wanted to buy it, but as it turned-out no one knew about the two malevolent teens. It was as if the two villains had completely vanished, or had never existed in the first place.

“Near as I can figure, Mr. Joey, they musta come

here on vacation from some other state.” Pig assumed.

Without money or medical insurance, Pig never received physical therapy, ergo months later, he still had a marked limp, so I bought him a bathing suit, and in the evenings, I’d drive him out to the beach, and he’d walk up and down along the beach in waist deep water, for a half hour each time. It was a crude form of physical therapy, but over time, it eliminated Pig’s limp; otherwise, he might never have become such an excellent boxer.

On the days, I didn’t have the time to drive to the beach, I’d paid twenty-five cents for him to swim in the YMCA pool, where he’d usually just hang on to the side of the pool and kick his legs, or walk back and forth in the shallow end. Every now and then, he’d duck down into the Y’s basement to hit the heavy bag, and that’s how he first got interested in boxing. Finally, after seven or eight months, Pig’s limp was completely gone, and he could run, again. The leg had fully recovered. It also appeared that Pig had given-up his search for his attackers, and had stashed the antique revolver. To keep it from rusting, he’d wrapped it in a kitchen towel soaked in motor

oil, then placed the extremely oily towel in a plastic bag, knotted it closed, and stowed it under a partially collapsed wooden back-porch, of a newspaper subscriber. Pig had finally stopped talking about the two muggers, so I wrongly assumed that he'd given-up his desire for payback.

But then, it wasn't long, and an unexpected thing transpired. One of Pig's older cousins, a seventeen year old named Reno, showed-up at the Mobile bus station, for an unannounced visit, with Pig's family. About ten years prior, Pig's family had immigrated to Mobile, from the tiny Alabama town of Bay Minette, which then had a population of about twenty-five hundred. The small municipality is roughly thirty miles to the northeast of Mobile, and was populated by approximately ninety-five percent black folks. At the time, Pig's grandparents, and most of his aunts, uncles, and cousins still lived there. Only Pig's immediate family, and one gay uncle lived in Mobile. The gay uncle was something of an oddity. He was a tall muscular fellow, possessing a feminine type of personality, yet he was renown for his fighting skills. Several fairly masculine heterosexual black males had made the mistake of making fun of the gay uncle, and got more than their feelings hurt.

Reno arrived in Mobile for his visit, unaware that Pig had been robbed, attacked, and severely wounded. For that matter, it had been so long since Reno had visited, that he didn't know that Pig was a paperboy. When Pig told Reno the details about his being beaten, stabbed, and robbed, and showed him the scars, Reno was shocked, but not so much because of Pig's misfortune, but because of the coincidental fact that he, Reno, knew exactly who had attacked Pig, and where they lived and worked! Of course, this unexpected serendipitous discovery reignited Pig's yearning for vengeance, and so Pig retrieved, cleaned, and reloaded the aged .32 caliber pistol. Revenge can be a dangerous thing, or just a waste of valuable time, but sometimes it's simply justice.

Well, all the time you spend trying to get back what's been took from you, more is going out the door. After a while, you have to try to get a tourniquet on it.

From the movie, *No Country for Old Men*, written and directed by Joel and Ethan Coen, and based on Cormac McCarthy's book by the same name.

In Bay Minette, Reno worked at an old-fashioned saw mill, loading heavy sections of log into the big wooden guide trough, at the end of which was a massive rotating toothy saw-blade, turned by belts and motors, cutting mostly pine, oak, maple, cypress, juniper, and rarely walnut, into rough planks and boards. The description of the sawmill sounded much like the one, which had caused Jim's leg to be amputated, when I was a young child. If you'll recall, in the first of these books, Jim was the husband of Bernice, my Grandma's black underpaid maid. Those old sawmills were nothing, if not dangerous.

At the mill, Reno also shoveled the sawdust and bark; as well, he helped stack the newly cut lumber onto the beds of long-haul trucks, that would go barreling along the back country roads of Alabama to various processors and distributors. In those days, the rough-cut lumber was actually used for home construction: rafters, joists, tresses, beams, studs, etc. As a result of all the manual labor, Reno was a heavily muscled young man. The sawdust, chips, and discarded branches were sold-off to a local paper mill, in nearby Cantonment, Florida. Andrew Jackson and his troops camped in that area, back in 1814. A

cantonment is a term for a temporary encampment of soldiers, and so that's how the one horse town got its odd little name. Considering the number of trees which were in the cantonment area, it was only reasonable that a paper mill sprang-up there. Today, there still are trees there, just not nearly so many. A couple of years ago, that paper mill mysteriously exploded. It was the most exciting thing that ever happened in the tiny town.

Trucking was not so carefully supervised, in those days. There weren't as many weighing and inspection stations, which when it's all said and done, is just states stealing money, and raising the cost of all commodities, which are delivered by trucks, which is practically everything. Without all those inspection stations, often the truckers carried cases of moonshine, hidden within the stacks of lumber, or under a load of wood chips, sawdust, or bark. The sawdust was the preferred hiding substrate, since it kept the bottles in the wooden cases from rattling. Southern Alabama was famous for its illegal moonshine stills. On windless evenings a smoky fog hung over some of the Alabama hills, created by the many fires of the stills. In those days, if a cop uncovered a load of shine, he'd often just take a

couple bottles, call it ‘cop-tax,’ and let the driver proceed. In those days, blacks referred to the forests surrounding Bay Minette as “lightning-land,” because there were so many hidden white-lightning stills.

Periodically, I’d buy an occasional case of shine, keep it in the car trunk, and sell it by the pint bottle, making fifty cents to a dollar on each one. Being a district manager with thousands of newspaper customers, it was a snap to find buyers, who loved the moonshine. In addition, I sold to the judges and attorneys, who worked-out and socialized at the YMCA. Moonshine had more than twice the kick of the commercial whiskey, since it was roughly 190 proof (95% alcohol), whereas most popular whiskeys are only 80 proof (40% alcohol). You had to be careful, who you bought your shine from, less you drink lead, from a poorly made still. If you’re thinking about building a still, it’s important to use lead-free solder, or make the still out of stainless steel and/or copper, with threaded joints, rather than using solder. Brain damage, due to lead poisoning, is not something you can recover from, so you could end-up like me. Whatever cognitive deficit is created by lead, tends to be semi-permanent. Now, there are over five thousand water systems in the United

States, in violation of lead levels, and they're fast dumbing down America! Of course, it's usually the poor, who can't afford bottled water, so who cares? Right? A gradual ten or twenty point drop in IQ, may be detected on an IQ test, but in day to day interaction, it may go unnoticed.

<http://www.cnn.com/2016/06/28/us/epa-lead-in-u-s-water-systems/>

Only once did I go out into the country to visit an actual mash-still. It was surrounded by densely leafy green Kudzu vines, which were killing most of the surrounding pine trees. The shine-still employed two elevated (on stacks of bricks) large stainless steel tanks, heated by propane burners, and was situated about two hundred yards off a largely unused road, which wasn't much bigger, than a donkey trail. The narrow road had once been used by farmers to access a small fishing pond, but the moonshiners had dumped a truck load of fertilizer in the pond, effectively killing all the fish, thereby discouraging the local fishermen. The guys that worked the still, hunted in the surrounding woods for food, including gopher turtle, now on the endangered list. The

interesting thing about that still was how it was camouflaged.

A rickety wooden framework had been built around the tanks, and the massive kudzu vines had effectively covered the framing, creating a large plant walled room. It only took a few weeks for the vines to hide the stills. In Alabama, people used to say that Kudzu was, 'the vine that ate the state,' and that's an understatement. It consumes forest like a starving T. Rex eating its' prey. The vine had originally been brought into the US, from somewhere in the eastern hemisphere, probably Japan. Some people think that kudzu was brought to the South, during the New Orleans 1883 Exposition. Serendipitously, the plant that has been commonly used to hide most of moonshine stills, is now reputed to be slightly useful in the treatment of alcoholism. As you might expect, many of the moonshiners were alcoholics, and some started picking the Kudzu leaves and boiling them, for food, a type of eatable greens, and as a result, they discovered the plant's medicinal value.

Pig's two black teenage assailants worked at the same sawmill, with Reno. The mill's white boss man referred to the black male workers, as 'boys,' and even the older black men workers were also called,

‘boys.’ My Grandma referred to her seventy or eighty something year old, black gardener, John, as her ‘yard boy!’ Heaven forbid, that a black man be recognized as an adult! In those days, most blacks just accepted such pejoratives, without the slightest bit of protest, for if trouble started, and the police became involved, there was little to no chance for the black person to receive justice; most likely, they’d be labeled as being ‘uppity,’ and receive something painful. Now, here in Mobile before a redneck refers to a black man as a boy, he looks around first, to make sure there isn’t one nearby, or he might get his ass handed to him.

After work, most of the older black men at the sawmill, where Reno worked, would go home to clean-up and relax, with their wives or girlfriends, but a few of the younger black guys would go directly to the local juke-joint, which was nothing more than a small dilapidated ill-kept cinderblock building with a rusty tin roof, a rather poor excuse for a bar. There, the young people could dance, play pool, drink, and meet an occasional young lady, or one of the local prostitutes. ‘The juke’, as it was called, served mostly the local white-lightning and cheap brands of beer. The club often got most, if not

all, of their hard-earned pay, and was responsible for many a fist fight, as well as the breakup of many a relationship.

Reno said that the two powerfully built black teens, who had beaten and stabbed Pig, were two brothers named, Curtis and Derrick. They were eighteen and nineteen, and from the hefting of heavy logs onto the sawmill's guide trough, and the loading of lumber onto the trucks, they had become remarkably brawny young men. No one at the mill liked the ill tempered pair, and so the evil brothers pretty much stayed to themselves. One evening, Reno had gone to the juke, after work for a drink, and while there, he accidentally overheard the two brothers in a drunken argument. The two were knee-walking drunk, trying to play a game of eight ball. During the argument, Reno overheard Curtis loudly admonish Derrick. He remembered hearing the bizarre conversation, between the two brothers, and described it to Pig and me.

“You need to check yourself. You and your badass self... stab’n that little nigga paperboy, in his leg like that! Shit, man! He was just a little kid. The beat’n we gave him was bad enough, without you use’n that stupid knife a yours... stick’n the kid in de

leg like dat!” Curtis had scolded his brother, Derrick.

“Fuck the God damn paperboy, who gives a shit? I told him to just give-up the money. He wouldn’t listen... dat little shit! You worry too fuck’n much. Besides, you ain’t the one that got bit. That little nigga bit my wrist, near clean to the bone. Just look at my wrist, it’s a huge scar, and I couldn’t work for two weeks, cuz ah that bite. It still hurts, and you know that you spent his money, same as me. We split it, even-up, and you damn sure took it. Sides, yo the one who kicked the little nigga in his mouth! That kick really fucked-up the kid, so don’t give me shit about de knife!” Derrick replied.

“Now, cuz of you, and your fuck’n knife, I’m afraid to be show’n my face in Mobile, anymore. I be stuck in this shit-hole town, cuz ah you and your stupid stab’n that little kid. We could be partying in Mobile this weekend, but if that kid sees us and calls the po-po we go to jail, and no black man wants to deal wit de Mobile po-po; especially, for stab’s a kid. They’d probably call it attempted murder. And you know that he went to the hospital, after what we did, and de po-po got called. Who de fuck stabs a little boy, anyway? A beat’n is one thing, stab’n is another. One mo second, and we’d a had de money, anyways.

You still needs to throw that old knife away. Dat knife be evidence, Derrick.” Curtis responded.

Reno also recalled seeing the bite mark on Derrick’s lower forearm, close to the wrist. As mentioned, after Reno’s revelation, Pig retrieved the pistol from under the garage, cleaned, and reloaded it. The next day, Pig returned with Reno to Bay Minette. The older Reno, who had the driver’s license, borrowed Pig’s mother’s rusty old car, and the boys simply told her, that they were going to visit their larger family in Bay Minette for a day or two. Pig’s mother let Reno use the car, agreeing that she’d take the bus to go to and from her work, for the next couple of days.

Both the lumber mill and the juke-joint were north, of the Bay Minette City limits, and spaced about a mile apart, roughly a 20 minute walk on a dirt path through the woods. Around 5 pm, after the mill closed, the two sinister brothers would consistently walk along a well-worn dirt path, to the juke joint. Once north of Bay Minette, Reno walked Pig down that path and around the area, so Pig could get the lay of the land, and find a spot to stage his attack. The diameter of the tree trunk, Pig selected, was about three feet. It was only two feet off the

trial, which Curtis and Derrick used to get to the juke, and the perfect concealment from which to launch the assault. The evening after scouting-out the area, Reno put some gas in the car, checked the oil level, made sure the battery had plenty of water, and checked the connections, so he could be assured that the old car would dependably start. Pig and Reno once again test fired the pistol, to make sure it was dependably operational. That night and most of the following morning and afternoon, Pig visited at Reno's home.

As far as the mill knew, Reno was still on vacation in Mobile, visiting relatives. Just before the mill closed, Pig sat with the loaded gun, behind the aforementioned wide pine tree, located about midway between the mill and the juke-joint, and about two hundred yards off an old logging road, where Reno waited in Pig's mother's rust-bucket, the getaway car. Pig carried extra bullets in his pocket, just incase the car didn't start, and he'd have to kill the two brothers, which he only planned on wounding. Things can often go astray, when it comes to violence.

As the two ruthless brothers walked along the dirt path, headed toward the juke, about halfway

there, the twelve-year old Pig heard them coming. Behind the thick pine tree, Pig cocked the gun, then casually stepped-out and walked directly toward the pair of evil brothers. Pig kept his head slightly down, with the pistol firmly gripped in his right hand, but hidden behind his right thigh. As a disguise, little Pig wore a cheap straw hat, made from woven strips of palm leaves. Reno had found the hat in the woods. The sudden appearance of Pig from behind the tree made the brothers stop in wonder, but little Pig just kept walking toward them on the path. Looking out, from just under the brim of the straw hat, Pig recognized the malicious pair, then once he was within three feet of the two brothers, he didn't waste time talking. He wheeled the gun around from behind his leg, and immediately shot Derrick in his right leg, about mid-thigh.

Shocked, the powerfully built Derrick grabbed his wounded thigh, simply sat down hard on the path, then he threw-up. Pig turned to shoot Curtis, who had wasted no time, and had already turned to run, so Pig shot and missed, immediately fired again, and hit Curtis in the right butt cheek. Curtis hobbled-off a few feet then fell on his side, holding his injured butt, screaming in pain; then, holding his wounded

thigh, Derrick wiped the vomit off his mouth, with his forearm, and began to beg.

“Please, please, please don’t shoot me, no mo!”

Pig turned-back to Derrick, who’d stabbed him that day, and then shot him a second time in the same thigh, in almost the same spot. The second bullet for Derrick was not a planned action. Most likely Derrick’s begging had the reverse effect on Pig. The second shot to Derrick’s thigh had been a spontaneous hateful decision, an impulse born of white-hot rage; at least, that was basically how Pig roughly described it later that night.

“Shoot’n him the second time, was like a pop went-off in my brain. It happened fast, before I knew what I was doin. I just shot him, again. It felt good. Show did, Mr. Joey. I hated hear’n Derrick’s damn voice, beg’n me not to shoot him! That’s why I shot him, twice. He knew I was gonna shoot him again in the same leg, cuz he pulled his hands away, right fo’ I pulled de trigger.” Pig explained.

Pig had then removed his straw hat, and proceeded to deliver a small speech to the two helpless wounded brothers. Much of the well rehearsed little speech was fiction, but with a clear

purpose. It went something as follows.

“Don’t be think’n about fuck’n with me, no mo. All my friends and family knows, who you two is (a lie). We knows where you two live and dat you two work at that sawmill, and where you gets drunk at that stupid juke-joint (truth). I knows who your family is and where they lives, too (a lie, except Reno did know them, and where they lived). You try to hurt or kill me, and next time you two punks will both be dead (truth), along with all ah your worthless family (a lie). You fuck’n bums... beat’n and stab’n me, a child! I hurt for so long, cuz’a what you did to me... a twelve year old child and you beat and stabbed me, clean through my leg, made me piss blood, broke my tooth, broke my ribs, and fucked-up my throat (truth), so I could hardly breath! Fuck you two! I don’t think yo family would approve ah what you did to a kid. Don’t be forgotten what I say bout yo families, neither. You’ll never see us com’n (a lie)! Just be glad I’m not kill’n you twos (truth)!”

Pig told me that during his speech, he noticed that Curtis passed out, for about five-seconds, so Pig momentarily stopped his speech. When Curtis woke-up, he started screaming, till Pig stuck the gun in his face and told him to shut the fuck up, then Pig

continued-on with his little speech.

“Thanks to you two, I’m a man, now. And if you two come to Mobile, I will kill you (possibly true), or one of my six older brothers (a lie) will kill you. They all knows what you and your family look like (a lie). I should probably kill you two, now (not a lie). Everyone in my big family knows about you two. I got pictures of both of you coming outta that sawmill, where you work, and the stupid juke-joint where you play pool and get drunk, and the house you sleep in (lies). My brothers all been out here and seen you two (a lie). They been in the juke with you two. We know everything bout you (a lie) pieces ah shit. They all wants to kill you, but I just shot you, and I’m let’n you live. You’d best be happy wit that. If you decide to tell the police about me, a child shoot’n you, I’ll be going to juvey (juvenile detention), and both you will be in prison for a long long time, especially when the judge sees my medical record (the truth), from the hospital you two put me in. And I will be tell’n the judge what ya’ll did to me (the truth). Also, I done had a friend write a letter for me (the truth, I wrote the letter), all about what you two did, so if anything happens to me it’s mailed straight to the State’s Attorney’s office and the police

(the truth), long wit yo pictures (a lie). You two stupid niggers, hear me? People in prison don't like no niggers, who be stab'n children (the truth). They be kill'n you (the truth)! Hear me? I ought'a be put'n a bullet in yo heads." Pig threatened.

There was enough truth mixed in with the lies that the two foul brothers believed Pig, and so they never opted for revenge, and probably steered clear of Mobile. Of course being wounded, neither Derrick nor Curtis were able to follow Pig, as he slowly jogged away, on his preselected escape route, to meet-up with Reno, waiting in the car, hidden on the nearby logging road. Having heard the shots, Reno already had the engine running, and the passenger door open for Pig's return. One minute later, in Bay Minette, Reno stopped at a pay phone, called the police and reported the two wounded men in the woods. Reno lied and said they were white men, to better insure that the cops would hurriedly respond with an ambulance. Luckily for Pig, both the evil brothers lived. Derrick didn't lose his leg, but forever has sported a major limp, due to a shattered femur and nerve damage. As the weeks passed, Reno called and gave updates on the brothers' painful recoveries. It was music to Pig's ears.

Once back in Mobile, the gun was broken into pieces. The hammer's firing pin smashed. The barrel was beaten almost flat on an anvil with a sledgehammer and hacksawed into three pieces in Pig's uncle's backyard workshop. All the pieces and the bullets were carefully wiped with a rag soaked in gas, put in a bag, and the bag was later emptied into highly inaccessible portions of the swamp north of Mobile Bay. It is a dreary swamp, with lots of cypress trees, hanging Spanish moss, and the waters are still filled with countless numbers of insects, frogs, snakes, and large toothy prehistoric alligators.

That night, after the two got back to Mobile, the three of us went out to eat at a local Mobile seafood restaurant. In exchange for my buying the meals, I was granted every exciting aforementioned graphic detail of Pig's encounter with the two brothers. Listening to the young Pig, calmly describe what he'd done, was slightly disconcerting, yet I was proud of him. While some males are born to be violent, I think violence had made Pig violent. Years later as an adult, Pig would shoot and kill two people, but unfortunately not for a just cause. One of those he killed was his cheating girlfriend, the other person was himself. Frequently, when some people,

especially young people, have endured terrible things, they become capable of doing terrible things.

Reno continued to work hard at the mill. After eight months, when the depraved brothers sufficiently recovered, and returned to work, they told everyone at the mill, that a large drunk homeless white man had shot and robbed them, after surprising them with the gun in the woods. Reno later told Pig that the two brothers had miraculously become kinder in their dealings with the other mill workers. Sometimes violence works in a positive way. Managing all those twenty black paperboys was never boring.



SUPER SAM THE FIREMAN

There were twelve district managers in charge of all the newspaper deliveries for the entire city of Mobile. As mentioned, I ran district seven. Each afternoon, just before the afternoon edition of the paper was dropped-off at the ‘bundle sites,’ we twelve district managers would meet at a redneck country-western restaurant called, *Kayguil’s Cafe*. Over lunch, we would discuss such intellectually stimulating topics as: which paperboys had the most customers, the price of rubber bands and plastic bags to put the folded or rolled newspapers in, on rainy days, which paperboys were the most or least dependable, which district had the ugliest or best looking hookers, which paperboys had been arrested and for what, who among the district managers had

the least amount of sleep (I consistently won that contest), which paperboy had recently been bitten by a dog, which customers were the most difficult to collect from and how many months they owed, who had some moonshine for sale (that was usually me), whose marriage was on the rocks, foolish things which various customers had done, etc.

On the category of most difficult customers, I often won, since obviously poor people are less apt to pay, and my district was plainly poverty stricken, and had more than its share of interesting inhabitants. Part of this was owing to the fact that the stresses of being poor can exacerbate mental illness, drug abuse, and alcoholism. The agonies of poverty are many and varied. Allow me to give you a brief example, of a difficult customer, before launching into the main story of this chapter.

One of my paperboys had asked me to help him collect from a rather quirky and obstinate elderly female customer, who was something of a renown non-stop alcoholic. The woman was the person Pig's younger brother had stolen the pistol from. She was old yet still relative attractive, and so men would frequently be having sex with her for a bottle of tequila. Besides sex and tequila, she was also

addicted to playing cards. She hadn't paid her newspaper bill for quite some time. It was a warm summer afternoon, when the paperboy and I stepped up onto her creaky wooden porch. The bottom corner of the warped unlatched screen wooden door was evidently swollen and stuck in the doorframe, so the top half bounced and banged, as I knocked, while the tiny unlatched metal hook on the inside rattled against the wood. Because of the angle of the sun, and the heavily oxidized blacken screen, I couldn't see inside. Foolishly, I pressed my nose against the dark screen, cupping my hands on either side of my face in an attempt to reduce the glare and see inside.

I saw that the heavier main door was indeed wide open, and standing immediately on the other side of the screen was the short sexy yet rather bizarre looking black woman, with a face like a crazy devil doll... lips pulled back, teeth bared, and eyes bulging from their sockets. She was dressed only in men's boxers and a white tank-top. Her exposed skin was covered in beads of sweat, like she's just stepped out of a sauna, but it was a mildly cool afternoon. In her right hand, she held an extra large bottle of *Jose Cuervo Tequila*. The weird unexpected sight jolted me. It was then that I recalled that Tequila made

certain women go literally insane.

Pulling my face back from the screen, I awkwardly mumbled, “Oh, hello there!”

Without pressing my face to the screen, I introduced myself, and inquired if I could please collect for the previous three months of newspaper deliveries, which she owed the paperboy, who was then quietly standing next to me wide eyed and clearly nervous. The little black woman briefly laughed, then she loudly belched. Next, she harshly yelled at the top of her lungs, through the dark screen, as if the paperboy and I were standing ten blocks away.

“Hang-on you two! I’m show is gonna be pay’n ya’ll! Yes, I am! I show am. Give me a second! I’m get’n what ya’ll be need’n. Show nuff!” She drunkenly slurred-out those oddly stated words, then judging from the creaking floor, she walked away, presumably to get the money she owed the paperboy.

From the manner in which she’d spoke, it was hard to tell if she was being nice or threatening, so I was left with an uncertain feeling. I heard what sounded like a bureau drawer slamming shut, and then the paperboy wisely took a step back.

Something told me the paperboy knew what was coming, so I followed suit, stepping back to the middle of the porch, roughly six feet from the door. From the sounds of the creaky floorboards, it seemed like she was returning. I prayed she was only bringing the paperboy's money. The paperboy and I just stood waiting, like a couple of bumps on a pickle, and I found myself wishing that I could see through the screen, without having to put my face back onto it. *What is that sexy little lunatic doing?*

Suddenly the diminutive woman thrust open the screen door, and there the sweaty sexy little black she-devil stood, holding an extremely large pistol tightly clutched in both her hands. The woman had evidently acquired a replacement pistol. She looked to be a few light years beyond crazy. As she began to elevate the big revolver to take aim, I quickly shoved the paperboy off to my right, and ordered him, "Run for it!"

Without stopping, I ducked, spun, and sprinted in the opposite direction for the edge of the porch. There was a single very loud shot, but I never determined where the bullet went. The paperboy and I leaped off opposite ends of the sexy little black lunatic's porch. We both hit the ground running, the

paperboy looped around behind her house. Ran and hid behind trees and cars, until we both were behind my car parked on the opposite side of the street, and a half block down from the woman's house.

Neighbors were looking out their doors, and I yelled, asking them to call the cops, but figured they already had. The drunk little sexy woman just stood on her porch, breasts swaying behind the flimsy tank-top, eerily smiling and squinting, while waving the pistol. She was laughing loudly. Apparently, a cop had heard the shot and came quickly driving up. The paperboy and I flagged him down, while still hiding behind my car. When the strange little lunatic saw the cop car, she quickly walked back inside her house, loudly slamming her front door.

The cop radioed-in, and after a half dozen cop cars had arrived, an older gray haired lieutenant called out for the woman to come-out of her house. Cops were more casual in their approach to such things back then, and people didn't carry cellphones, which could film everything. The cop didn't bother to call in the swat team, because there wasn't one, then. The police were more down to earth, in how they handled such.

“Get your ass out here Madeline, you drunk sexy

little idiot! If you don't come out right now, you're going to jail for a long long long time. And, you know, that your fine claustrophobic black butt can't handle jail. You know all you do is shake and cry the whole time you're in lockup, and you also remember what the judge told you, last time. You don't want to go to jail, Madeline. You'll be in there for a long time. You know you shouldn't be drink'n that tequila, and I know you've got to be drink'n it... crazy as you're act'n, right now. Shooting your gun and scaring people. So let me see you. Nobody wants you to go to jail. Step-out on the porch. And Madeline, and don't be bring'n that God damn hand-cannon with you. Leave the gun in the house. If you don't come out, you're going to jail, but if you come out with that gun, one of my officers just might shoot you. Hear me? Madeline, come on out, sweetie, and leave the damn gun on the floor in the house. If you come-out without the gun, we'll take the gun and the booze, and let you sober-up at home. Then, we all can just relax and forget about this horse shit. When you come-out, I want to be able to see both your hands. If you don't come out, you just might find that wooden house of yours is on fire. Now, hurray your ass up, Madeline."

Is the cop threatening to burn-down her house, or just bluffing her? A few seconds later, looking sheepish and blinking rather rapidly, Madeline complied and once again appeared on the porch, but this time minus the huge revolver and the extra large Tequila bottle. She just stood there with her arms wrapped around herself, and then lowered her head. The cops entered her house, came out with her gun and what was left of the bottle of *Jose Cuervo*. The lieutenant told her to behave herself, and departed without arresting her. The cops simply drove away with the gun. Police procedures have certainly changed.

My paperboy never got paid, so he never threw Madeline another paper, unless he had an extra one. She was actually fairly sweet, when she was sober. When the downtown office heard what had happened, they reimbursed my paperboy for the three missed months. Apparently, old Madeline had been a high class hooker, who knew a few influential white men on the city counsel. Her other saving grace was that she had a son, who was a true war hero, a silver star winner. He'd been shot and paralyzed, while serving in Vietnam. When he gotten out of rehab, he killed himself. That's when Madeline

started on the *Jose Cuervo*, so no one really wanted to put her in jail. Everyone knew that she'd just fired the shot for the thrill of it, and probably just shot a hole in her porch roof. If that *Jose Cuervo*-gun thing happened today, she'd be facing a mandatory ten years in prison, or she might be provoked by certain police, and then shot dead. Her son's death would most likely be given little, if any, consideration. Per capita, America now locks-up more of its citizens, than does any other country on earth, including: China, Russia, Cuba, Somalia, Mexico, Egypt, Libya, Nigeria, Iran, North Korea, Iran, Yemen, Libya, etc.

As mentioned, each morning and afternoon, I worked hard to make sure that every paperboy got all his papers thrown. They were amazing kids, extremely poor, hence they were always struggling. Never would I have been able to walk a mile in any of their worn-out dirty shoes. For that matter they often had no shoes. They were giants among men by age of twelve. They were like Black *Energizer Bunnies*, only they could keep on running, without the batteries. At times, they seemed almost supernatural in what they could endure. More than forty years later, I'm still surprised when I think about them, how crappy their lives were, yet how well they

persevered. But unfortunately, this is not to say that all of them were saints. I'm sad to say, that one of my paperboys turned-out to be a somewhat evil character.

Roosevelt Jones, was almost fifteen and already weighed over three hundred and fifty pounds. He was my oldest paperboy, and threw his route from a bicycle, whose tires always looked almost flat, even when they were fully inflated. His good-natured mother was far heavier than her son, and worked as a maid for the mayor's wife. Roosevelt was nicknamed, 'Fifty Cents.' He'd earned that moniker, because whenever he'd run across someone, he'd approach them with his intimidating bulk and say, "Hey, man! You got fifty cents, I can borrow? I'm so hungry." Of course, his use of the word 'borrow,' actually meant he'd never pay the person back. Fifty Cents was weirder than Satan gargling holy water. You could tell that Fifty Cents hated people, in that he hardly listened, constantly interrupted, and just pretended to enjoy the conversation, but frequently he'd walk-off in the middle of someone's commentary. Plus, he pointedly avoided eye contact. He was unable to stop himself from rolling his eyes. It was like he had a marked distain for the entire

human race, even for his own mother, or perhaps I should have said... especially for his mother. She seemed to love him, yet for some reason he distinctly hated her.

At that time in Mobile, there were a series of rather gory serial murders. The MO (*modus operandi*) was unlike any I've ever heard of in my entire sixty-five years. All of the victims were frail elderly white females, most of them were in their mid to late eighties. The youngest was seventy-eight years old, the oldest ninety-three. There would be a new body found almost every week. The victims were all widows, who lived alone, so the bodies were usually found by a visiting relative, healthcare provider, or social worker. The women had nothing in common, except for their age and race. For a long time, the police were stumped as to how the older women were being killed. The bodies were all found in their house and appeared to have been flattened, as if they'd been run-over by a steamroller, many of their bones had been crushed, so there was massive internal damage, and blood loss, where the shards of broken bone, i.e., skull, ribs, pelvis, etc., had pierced flesh and organs, while they were apparently still alive. Thank God for shock... no pain... no fear.

Often the family couldn't recognize the victim's remains, for the head and face had also been smashed flat.

The elderly women were usual identified by their clothing, and by the fact that they were always found in their own home. Dental records didn't work, since the jaw was usually crushed, and none of the old ladies had ever been fingerprinted, since none had ever been arrested. For months, the police were at a loss to explain the bizarre murders. The only clues were bloody boot prints, which matched the print of standard issue combat boots, and a deposit of semen next to each body. The semen could only have provided the killer's blood type, since this was long before DNA analysis. Because of the combat boots, the police assumed the killer might have been a crazy military guy. None of the aged women had any known enemies, and nothing appeared to have been stolen.

For some inexplicable reason, Fifty Cents had simply knocked the unfortunate ladies to the ground, then jumped up and down on them, with his combat boots and massive bulk, literally flattening their frail bodies. He always wore those combat boot, and they were always laced all the way up. That's right, his

murder weapons were his extra wide size sixteen laced-up boots, and his tremendous body weight. Later, when questioning Fifty Cents, the police found out those gruesome details. Even the skull, ribs, and pelvis would be flattened. Hopefully, the poor elderly women were unconscious, early during the murder. It was because of the his paper route, as well as the routes of his fellow paperboys, that Fifty Cents knew where all those elderly white widows lived. All of them were found outside my district.

Fifty Cents got caught, because he had decided to steal a pistol from one of the victim's houses, and had given it to one of his friends, who then pawned it. The victim's family members had noticed the weapon was missing and had reported it to the police. During a routine police check of the pawnshops the stolen weapon was discovered, and the police then easily backtracked it to the friend, and the friend confessed he'd gotten the gun from Fifty Cents. Surprisingly, Roosevelt promptly confessed to the morbid murders. By the time he was caught, fourteen older ladies had the life crushed out of them.

To this day, no one knows why he performed those odd hideous murders, other than he was clearly

nuts... another case of seriously messed-up gray mush. The outlandish thing about the repellent murders was that the women had not been sexually assaulted, but as mentioned, a semen deposit was always found on the floor next to the body. These deeds were all because the neurons, which represented the very essence of hate and cruelty, stimulated the *Septal Nucleus*, deep in the dark mysterious limbic brain of Fifty Cents. There were no apparent issues of abuse, during his upbringing. The evolutionary and existential reasons for such behavior remain beyond everyone's comprehension, save for perhaps those few, who are like Fifty Cents.

The rest of my paperboys, the other nineteen, were generally good and truly admirable kids. They may have done certain minor illegal things, but there was no doubt they were good. None of their homes had air conditioning, and several were without electricity; not because there wasn't an electric wire running to their house, but because they couldn't afford the power bill. Most of them never received such things as: regular meals, clean sheets, hot water, proper medical care, etc. One of my paperboys, Jason, threw his route each day on one foot, dragging his bad leg behind him, and sometimes, he

did a shuffling hopping kind of walk. Whenever possible, I drove him from house to house in my old *Ford*. Jason never complained about his leg, but occasionally he silently cried in pain. He had a crutch, without any padding, and no wheelchair.

Seven years prior, his right hip had been shattered by a driver, who had probably been drunk, and had just drifted off the road, and into Jason's front yard. The unconcerned motorist had hit the child, then immediately drove-off, leaving the, then six year old, laying unconscious in the front yard. One of Jason's brothers had seen what happened, and ran to a neighbor's house to call the ambulance.

According to Jason's mom, the shattered hip was never correctly fixed. Jason got the one obligatory ER visit, the one associated surgery, and a three week stay in the hospital, without any rehab, or follow-up. Afterwards, he simply laid at home in bed for two months, till his uncle walked into his bedroom one morning and told the kid he'd better get outta bed, or he was going to die there. So, gradually Jason taught himself to walk, as best he could. After four months, one of the screws worked its way out, through his skin, and the doc just said Jason didn't need it, anyway. Even so, the crippled kid could still laugh at

my smallest bad joke. As stated, these kids were amazing.

How Jason loved to laugh, and while his laughter brought me joy, it also severely humbled me. From his desperate crippled poverty-stricken position in life, he consistently radiated goodwill. Sincerely, I admired them all, except for Fifty Cents, who I looked at as simply being broken from birth. Perhaps, he can't be held accountable for the faulty hard-wiring he was born with. Nevertheless, he couldn't ever be allowed to roam free, and is probably still in the state run psych-ward. Too many 'successful' people tend to not agree with that assessment, and seem to enjoy the eye-for-an-eye approach, and I must admit that I don't have a good answer for the question, 'What about the dead victims, and the surviving grief-stricken family members?'

None of the paperboys knew about my drug dealing, but that was not because I was ashamed of it, for I'm sorry to say, I wasn't. But since the paperboys looked up to me as something of a role model, for a long time, I kept them in the dark about my dealing. That was slightly ridiculous of me, since they already admired some of the more successful

neighborhood drug dealers. Nevertheless, I wanted them to think that they could make it on their own, working within the system, without dealing drugs to make it through life. All the while, I knew that was a pipe-dream.

It wasn't till years later, that I better understood that the system is purposely geared to crush people like them, and by no means is it designed to rescue them. Neither political party really wants to help the poor. The democrats render too many blacks to be welfare dependent, just to get their vote, and the republicans simply hate blacks, and like to blame blacks for the country's economic woes. Sure, every now and then, a poverty stricken person escapes the hood, and gets rich, but it's rare, and it's usually due to some amount of work, mixed in with some luck. Generally, the democrats throw money at blacks, but always from a safe distance: social programs, small amounts of social security, food stamps, HUD housing, welfare, etc. Those programs are designed to deter the recipients from trying to better themselves. Why not free education and free healthcare? All you'd have to do is fairly tax the huge corporations. Or just take away ten percent of the massive budget going to the military. The US military

budget is more than twice the combined military budgets of China and Russia. Such small amounts of financial aid to the poor, as employed today, often encourages people to stay poor, stay dependent, and not work, while it gains one political party the poor people's vote. Still, this waste of resource allows the party to claim they did something. There's a good chance that if all that aid was simply stopped, the recipients might actually work harder, and learn to stand on their own feet. Maybe they might become innovative business folks. As it is, a very large percentage of America's poor are now incarcerated, and on the government's dime. Welfare and prison are not effective means by which to secure disadvantaged people's success.

Another reason I didn't tell the paperboys about my drug dealing was that the fewer people, who knew about my dealing, the safer I remained. Still, I'm reasonably certain that had the paperboys known, it would have made no difference in how they felt toward me, or in how they treated me. They were true zen masters in the art of camaraderie, freely giving their friendship, without boundaries, without judgement. In district seven almost all the black kids, once they reached the rip old age of ten,

smoked weed. By age sixteen, most had at least tried a hard drug.

This story began one afternoon, as a light rain was finishing, and I'd arrived at *Kayguil's Cafe* a few minutes early, for the usual afternoon district manager's meeting, and it's corresponding jaw-jacking lunch. Running behind, I didn't have time to drive one of my paperboys, Tony, back to the other side of the district, and still be on time for the meeting, so I just broke with tradition, and brought little black Tony into the restaurant with me. The restaurant manager would not have allowed the black kid in the restaurant, but I snuck him in via a side door, and put him in a back room, adjacent to the main dining area. It was a small room, just off the meeting room, used by the district manager's meeting.

Moreover, I knew the redneck racist district managers would also strongly disapprove of black Tony sitting-in on the meeting, Unbeknownst to them, Tony sat just barely around the corner from the large table, where the twelve district managers meant. The restaurant was practically empty that afternoon, except for a couple of old veterans, who only bought one cup of coffee and stayed for hours,

reliving the war and drinking the free refills. Before the district managers began to arrive, I gave Tony a few bucks, so he could order a plate of food, and I asked one of the lessor bigoted white waitresses to take care of him. Jim Crow was in full swing at that time of Mobile, so she looked surprised to see a black child in the restaurant; nevertheless, she smiled, and I thanked her for being ‘so understanding.’ Jim Crow died slowly in the South, and even though it was a few years past 1965, when the laws officially ended, the potent social constraints were still enforce almost everywhere. In *Kayguil’s*, the waitress and managers were all white; blacks were only allowed to work in the kitchen, entering and existing via the back door. Never once had I seen a black person eating there, only Tony, my paperboy. The country western restaurant was the favorite restaurant of the police, and as mentioned, most of law enforcement was *KKK*. In those days, it wasn’t too hard to determine if someone was a member. All you had to do was to express some hatred toward blacks, and say that you liked the klan. Often, you’d get a verbal invitation.

“Those worthless negroes are ruining our country...” might be a good led-in to discover a klansman.

And if the return comment was something like, “Those God damn worthless niggers, all need to be shipped back to fucking Africa,” then you could bet you were dealing with a klan member.

To say the least, that friendly white waitress, who waited on my paperboy, Tony, was an atypical Godsend, especially in that ultra redneck restaurant. Before the district managers began to arrive, I again instructed little Tony to be sure to wait for all the managers to leave the restaurant, before coming back around the corner, so as not to let the district managers know that he was there, and that afterwards, I’d help him throw his newspaper route. Tony clearly understood that I’d be in trouble, if the other district managers got wind of the fact that I’d brought him into the restaurant.

That day, the managers meetings were filled with the usual boring chit-chat and gossip, with only minor amounts of actual business stirred in. Tony was just out of sight barely around corner, quietly eating his food, but the child was be able to hear everything, which was said during the meeting. I’d fail to think about the fact that during those meetings, the various, more bigoted, district managers could often crudely tease me about

working in the all black district. Perhaps, I should have told the kid to sit in the car.

All the other district managers were older than I; ninety percent of them were one hundred percent redneck, and hardcore bigots, if not downright bonafide *KKK* members. They found it disconcerting that I refused to use the 'N' word, or complain about my all black district. Usually, I just disregarded their comments. To do otherwise might have caused me to lose my job, and I was married with a house payment, and jobs were hard to find.

The abusive comments that day happened to be much worse, than usual, and would take on a darker discourteous racial leaning, resulting in some fiery repercussions. It wasn't but five minutes into the meeting, and I was already catching racial ribbing from the managers, one of which, who was being particularly crude.

"Joey, how ya enjoying work'n in niggerville, these days?" He queried with a huge lantern smile on his pock-marked reddish face.

"You been getting any ah that stinky nigger pussy from those black bitches, who can't afford to pay their newspaper bill?" Another manager

inquired. *Shit! I hope Tony can keep calm, and stay put around the corner.*

Looking back, it was cowardly of me not to slug the asshole, but as mentioned, I didn't want to lose my job. The jerks disrespectful slur elicited a raucous round of laughter from the other redneck managers. Over forty years later, the humor in that comment remains hidden. If it were viewed as homophobia is today, the comment might mean that those men honestly liked the idea of having sex with a black woman. After all, nothing pumps the libido quite like taboo. Anything which causes the conscious brain to attempt to shut down its sex drive, evokes antithetical neurological activity.

"I bet some of those hot little nigger mamas can be real appreciative, if you were to help out their little kids delivering those newspapers. Know what I mean, Joey? Ha, ha, ha,..." Another manager contributed.

That comment produced yet a second, even louder, round of laughter. *Racist or not, why is that so funny?* The laughter contained the hidden invitation for me to join in. Knowing that Tony was just around the corner listening, I desperately tried, but unsuccessfully, to change the topic. But when the

other managers realized I was trying to steer the conversation elsewhere, they decided to ramp it up.

“Well Joey, how you like’n have’n to keep track of all those dumb-ass nigger paperboys? That shit would drive me nuts! Getting them to throw them routes has to be like trying to train a bunch a fuck’n monkeys. Ain’t that right, Joey? Ha, ha, ha, ha...! Nobody, in their right mind, would want district seven, the stupid nigger zone.” One of them commented.

They were then laughing so hard, the restaurant’s only two patrons were looking our way. The repeated outburst of laughter became progressively louder. *Tonys’ going to freak-out. Any second, he’ll come out of hiding around the corner! Then, I’m screwed, and there goes my job!* Even the two patrons had joined in on the laughing and were slapping their thighs. If you haven’t lived in the deep South of the 40s, 50s, 60s, or 70s, it’s hard to appreciate just how depraved certain white people could be. Those brilliant comments, concerning the sex with the black mothers, and the paperboys being like monkeys, had been mostly iterated by the manager of district six, whose nearly all white district bordered my nearly all black district seven.

He had run my district, before I got the job, and so several of my black paperboys knew him quite well, including Tony, just sitting around the corner in the adjacent room. Also, the manager of district six had a markedly distinctive voice, and the world's thickest country accent.

That irksome man's nickname was 'Super Buck,' because he repeatedly liked to claim that he'd once killed a twenty point buck, at three hundred yards. While twenty points is not a world record, it nonetheless gave Super Buck massive respect in the redneck community. Deer hunting takes very little skill, and the deer is usually no match for even the most inexperienced hunter, just make sure you're downwind, and don't make a lot of noise. A second-hand bolt-action high powered rifle, with a cheap but accurate scope, is all it takes. The deer can only be saved, if the wind changes direction, or if the hunter makes some significant amount of noise. Deer are not as sensitive, as most people think. This is not so say that all animals are easy prey, and there are some which it take a great deal of courage to hunt, i.e., a wild lions, tigers, certain bear, leopards, skilled well armed enemies, etc.

But if the hunter just doesn't move too much,

and the wind is right, a deer will frequently walk right up within a few feet, especially if the hunter is well hidden. Nevertheless, hunters spend lots of money on unnecessary supplies: expensive all terrain vehicles, scents, deer calls, gun cleaning gear, insect repellents, deer cleaning equipment, binoculars, camouflage clothing, guns, scopes, ammo, deer stands, archery equipment, bait corn, salt licks, game processing equipment, trail cameras, tree stands, etc. Most deer in the southern United States would only be a true challenge, if the hunter had to use a hand-thrown spear.

After the third round of laughter, Tony's head briefly peeked around the corner, and instantly I was afraid that he was going to be seen and create a scene. However, since he realized I could lose my job, he thankfully only barely peeked around the corner for a fraction of a second, just long enough to verify that it was actually Super Buck, who'd made the raw racial comments. If I'd realized, how awful Super Buck was going to be, I'd have never brought Tony into the restaurant.

Looking back, I should have known better... twenty-twenty hindsight. After all, the place was a hive of racists. The restaurant manager had

previously run off a young crippled black man, who'd been attempting to earn a living by selling small twenty-five cent paper bags of peanuts, from his wheelchair in the restaurant's back parking lot. Of course, many of patrons agreed with the manager about getting rid of the pesky black cripple.

Regrettably that day, I just let the other newspaper managers and Super Buck rave-on and make complete fools of themselves. In a perverse sort of way, I was glad that Tony was hearing Super Bucks comments, so he'd know what the racists were really like, if for no other reason than to better appreciate what I had to contend with nearly every day at the district manager's meeting... 'forewarned is forearmed,' *praemonitus praemunitus*.

Tony had endured the entire disgusting meeting, and had for my sake, not blown his cool, and revealed his presence, but once we were in the car and throwing his afternoon papers, it was obvious that he was more than merely miffed. In the past, he had occasionally spoken with those men, who pretended to be genuinely friendly, and racially unbiased. Little Tony fumed the entire time we threw his route, raving-on about Super Buck. It was impossible to calm Tony down, so I didn't even try. I

just nodded agreement, and let him rave-on. There was no doubt, that the young boy told some of the other paperboys, about what he'd heard Super Buck say. I should have suspected what was about to happen.

That night around 3 am, all the bundle drops in district six had mysteriously been set ablaze. The sirens of firetrucks could be heard through-out the entire city. There were so many fires, that a few firetrucks were brought in from nearby townships. It was the first time, that I'd heard of black people setting fire to white neighborhoods, instead of their own. That night, the city's skyline gave-off a pronounced orange glow; the eerie simmering light was visible for miles.

A privately owned convenience store, adjacent to one of the bundle drops, caught on fire and everything but the cinderblocks burned. The flames from the papers had reached-up to the store's wooden eaves, and quickly spread. Once the fire was finished, all that was left was the blackened block shell. Luckily, the store was closed and no one was inside. In addition, a furniture store caught fire and two-thirds of its inventory was lost. Tony and a couple of his friends had used gasoline. If it wasn't

for the fact that big oil needs to make money, and that cars run on it, the flammable liquid would probably be illegal, for the stuff is truly a terrorist's dream... liquid fire!

Thousands of newspapers burned-up in giant clouds of whitish-gray smoke, that night. Fortunately, none of the young arsonists were caught. Around seven thirty the next morning, I took several of my paperboys to breakfast, at a newly opened, minority owned, twenty-four hour diner down by the bay. We liked to eat there just to watch the amazing short-order cook in action. The cook was a tall ambidextrous red-bone gentleman. No one I've ever seen, before or since, could handle multiple orders, as he did. He'd quickly memorize about twenty breakfast orders, and turn them out, fast as light, never making a mistake.

While I'd asked to hear about Pig's shooting of the two brothers, with regards to the burned paper drops, I told the paperboys that I didn't want to know who'd torched-off the paper bundle drops. They told me anyway, ergo against my better judgement, I rewarded them with breakfast that morning. After the fires, Tony still wasn't fully satisfied. Most likely, he had kept replaying Super

Buck's words, in his young mind. And so, there'd be one additional minor act of revenge, but with a more deadly repercussion. Again, I didn't see it coming. With regard to the second act of revenge, once more, I asked the paperboys not to tell me who did it, worried that I'd become embroiled in a police investigation. Furthermore, I never mentioned the incident to my wife or friends, but unsuccessfully, tried to distract the managers from discussing it, was like trying to hide a trumpeting bull elephant, under a postage stamp.

During one of the afternoon meetings, a couple of days after the paper bundle fires, Super Buck erroneously stated that he was fairly certain that the arsonist had been a paperboy in his own district, with whom he'd recently had a major argument, and fired. Super Buck had gone so far as to file a police report, and a warrant had been issued for the arrest of the guiltless white kid. That little scenario reminded me of innocent Jason Stevens at the base school, in Rota, Spain, when I'd soaped the school windows. The blameless, and recently fired, paperboy was actually arrested and temporarily jailed, but after he'd been thoroughly questioned and the fires had been investigated, he was released from juvenile

detention. Just before and during the fires, he'd been staying with his aunt in the nearby town of Creola, and had witnesses to attest to it.

The final act of retribution occurred, early the next morning, right before sunrise. Super Buck would habitually stop at a certain gas station, which bordered my district. Like clockwork, he'd use the restroom, grab a free cup of coffee, then chat-up the fairly hot female clerk. Everyone knew that Super Buck was screwing the young girl, since he continually bragged about it, during our afternoon meetings. But that night, when Super Buck came out of the bathroom, and started pouring his coffee, he heard the alluring clerk scream.

“Oh, my God! I think your car's on fire! Isn't that your car out there, Super Buck? I'm calling the fire department! Jesus, I hope it doesn't explode or something!”

Howling a chain of obscenities, Super Buck ran out to use the water hose to squelch the flames, only to find that the water hose, which was generally attached to the faucet on the side of the store, wasn't there. The hose was later found up on top of the gas station's flat roof. The fire quickly turned Super Buck's car into a blackened burned-out shell. I recall

that the worst part of the fire was when the tires caught fire. The breezes that night whipped-up that nauseating odor, and spread it all over my district. No doubt Tony had just splashed a gallon of gas inside and over Super Buck's car then tossed in a match. He used the plastic bags, which we used to throw the newspapers in the rain, as gloves, so that there were no fingerprints on the hose, or on Super Buck's car. The bags were thrown into the car right before the match, and had burned-up in the fire.

Luckily, Super Buck didn't have any auto insurance. The state didn't require it, back then. Now, insurance companies literally rule the state government. Auto insurance is mandatory, and vastly overpriced. Since auto insurance is enforced by the police, it allows the insurance companies to jack-up their rates. The state's citizenry has no say, and since there are so few insurance companies, they actually control the rates. People, who can't afford the insurance, are arrested for driving without it. As a result, there's a hefty fine; that way, both the state and the insurance companies make money. One hand washes the other.

That day, Tony and I had a long talk, and without telling me that he'd actually burned Super

buck's car, he finally agreed to cool his jets, and let things go. He promised no more acts of revenge, against Super Buck. I wanted him to stop his campaign, not only for his sake, but for mine, as well. If it ever came out that indirectly I'd started those acts of revenge, by taking him into the restaurant that day, I'd have been hung-out to dry with the newspaper.

After his car burned, Super Buck had taken to packing heat. He showed all of us at the afternoon meeting that he was carrying the standard 1911 military colt .45, semi-automatic. Super Buck realized that the burning of the paper bundles of his district, and his car getting torched off, were personally directed at him, and he was clearly shaken to the roots. *Super Buck is scared shitless! I love it!*

"The next motherfucker, who fucks with me, is gonna be a dead motherfucker!" Super Buck threatened, while brandishing the gun.

He also told us that he'd gotten one of his redneck friends to ride him for a while, and to act as his body guard, claiming that the guy was an expert shot. I told the kids about the .45 and the bodyguard. While Tony was indeed finished with his revenge, I still couldn't resist saying a few things just to pump-

up Super Buck's paranoia.

“Super Buck... I'm really scared for you man. After all this pyro stuff... all those burned bundle drops, and now your car... Whoever's behind all these fires, is probably going to try to kill you, Super Buck! Think about it. Maybe your car actually had an incendiary bomb in it, and it was supposed to go off, while you were driving it! It could be a lucky thing that you got out of the car, when you did, to go in that store and use the bathroom. Whoever did all this is probably going to kill you, and maybe it'll be soon, or it may be a year from now, buddy! I'm seriously worried for you. Someone out there, obviously hates you!”

After those words, Super Buck was looking anxious and overly contemplative. He was plainly in fear for his life, so I continued on with my propaganda.

“You ought to take a few days off and look for another job. Have you screwed somebody's wife, or hurt someone, or owe some loan-shark a bunch of money? I can't imagine what it's like to burn to death, and I think that's exactly what that asshole has in mind for you. *And now for the coup de grace!* Hope he doesn't know where you live! But, you know

you're in the fucking phone book, along with your home address. Holy Shit! Just imagine, if you woke-up and your entire house was on fire, and there was no way out! You ought to get a dog to leave outside at night to protect your house. Of course, people can put some Valium in a chunk of ground beef, and knockout the dog. From now on, always check your car before you get in it. Have you seen anyone following you, lately? I hope the guy, who trying to kill you, doesn't have a hunting rifle, cuz that bodyguard of yours' can't stop a 30-06, fired from a distance." I rambled on, solely to pump-up his fear level, while enjoying the change in Super Buck's expressions.

Asking Super Buck, if he'd done someone wrong, plainly made him worry, since it was a fairly safe bet, that such a first rate jerk, had done any number of people wrong, and no doubt had a plethora of enemies. Still, I came to regret my dangerous comments for a couple of sad reasons. The first was that Super Buck went to the police station, and succeeded in getting the police to consider his burned-out car as an attempted murder; yet, nothing came of the investigation. The second reason was much much more grave.

Super Buck was considering taking my advice and finding a job elsewhere, and since a fair portion of the newspaper was managed by rednecks, he was easily able to persuade various good ole boys at the *Mobile News-Register* to give him several sterling recommendations. The old saying about polishing a turd, came to mind. With the favorable letters in hand, he applied for, and landed, a nearly identical job, with another newspaper in Austin, Texas, which was owned by the same parent company as the *Mobile News-Register*. Even the pay was going to be better for Super Buck. There was about a twenty percent increase in his salary, yet the cost of living was about the same as Mobile. At one of our district manager's meeting, he told us that the only bad thing about the job, would be putting-up with, "... all them stupid brown beaners, but they's got to be better than the dumb-ass niggers, we got here, in Mobile."

Though Super Buck was still living with his wife, he'd just received a notice of divorce, so he would be living as a single man, starting a new life in Texas, probably with a hot stripper girl friend. As it turned-out, it was looking like Tony's burning of Super Buck's car was going to actually be a big plus for Super Buck. He was truly happy about going to

Texas.

“They have better hunting in Texas... white-tailed deer and fucking antelope. Never shot me one of dem antelope. Can’t wait...” Super Buck proudly proclaimed.

My paperboys and I were glad he was leaving Mobile, we but hated the idea that he was going to a better situation. All Tony and his fellow arsonists had succeeded in doing was helping Super Buck. Within a couple weeks, Super Buck was ready to vacate the Mobile newspaper, and about to depart for Texas, so the other district managers had planned to make the last manager’s meeting a farewell party for Super Buck, with a fifth of *Wild Turkey*, and a few cheap gifts. Super Buck appeared to be genuinely touched, and so got extremely drunk. It was easy to tell that Super Buck was your usual belligerent sarcastic drunk. Everyone told him how much they were going to miss him, whereas everyone was glad he was leaving, especially me.

During the party, I kept checking the parking lot to make sure Tony wasn’t out there torching Super Buck’s new-used car. Super Buck had sold most of his gun collection to purchase the car. He left the party, behaving like the braggarde arrogant drunk that he

was. Once he had gotten home that night, he naturally managed to get in one last argument, with his newly divorced wife, before departing the next morning for Texas.

Super Buck had engaged a great divorce attorney, and had succeeded in leaving his wife practically nothing, so that last evening, during that argument with her, he began to gloat, about financially prevailing over her in the divorce. Repeatedly, he referred to her as ‘a stupid fucking bitch,’ ergo, she grabbed her pistol, aimed for his ugly face, and fired, but shot him through the neck. He died a minute after arriving in the emergency room, because the doc had trouble intubating him. While the wife probably deserved a medal, she was arrested for murder. I thought about my having brought Tony into the meeting, the subsequent newspaper bundle-drop fires, the burned convince store, the ruined furniture store, Super Buck’s car being burned, and about the huge amount of paranoia, I’d funneled into Super Buck’s pea-sized brain, and wondered how much fault I deserved for his being killed, and his wife being arrested. Fortunately for her, two of the district managers signed affidavits about how overbearing and hostile

Super Buck was, when he left the party, and the charges was dropped down to manslaughter. Super Buck's wife received five years probation, and so served no time.

For years, I've thought about the death of Super Buck. His murder somewhat bothered me, yet I never mentioned it to my wife, friends, or family, and I didn't dream about him, or flashback on anything related to him. Oddly enough, Super Buck was a solid believer, always went to church on Sundays, frequently would say that he knew where he was going when he died, meaning heaven, so there's a real chance he's now in heaven, if there is such a thing. Nevertheless, there are probably a fair number of blacks and brown people in heaven; in which case, I have no idea what Super Buck did about that. Perchance, he started his own branch of the *KKK* in heaven, and Jesus is the Grand Wizard.

[OB!]



THE TRAP HOUSE

Though married to a brilliant, moral, and beautiful young woman, I didn't honestly love her. Working long hard hours for the low-paying newspaper, and living in monotonous Mobile were fast killing my spirit. With few exceptions, I've always dealt rather poorly with tedium. Margo, was an intelligent attractive young woman, and wasn't a

hardcore addict, which I problematically prefer; still, my wife did smoke a fair amount of ganja, and while I did enjoy the occasional joint, I didn't like the herb nearly as much, nor as often, as she did. While smoking weed is pleasant, the stuff just tended to make me stupid, and the paranoia, which accompanied it, was irritating. Sure, weed enhances sex, music, and the taste of food, but for me, those things are good enough as they naturally exist. The older I get, the more I realize that normal brain chemistry is great, unless of course there's something actually wrong with your brain, but then of course, big pharma loves you.

My boredom wasn't totally Margo's fault, it was also, if not mostly, owing to the insanely hectic job, and being stuck in the banal backwoods city of Mobile, after living in the nation's capital. The culture of Mobile is to that of Washington DC, as a soggy book of matches is to a burning thermite grenade. Even so, Margo loved living in southern Alabama, and she still does... go figure. She was a wonderful white girl, who went orgasmic over: magnolia trees, playing simple church songs on the piano, white picket fences, various types of flower, southern antiques (even those ridiculous poorly made

pie-safes), southern cooking, the song *Amazing Grace*, and having sex for hours on end, usually to the pounding cadence of rock and roll, while seriously stoned on various types of killer weed. Those things nearly formed her entire universe; that is, until she got remarried and had kids.

Most guys would be thrilled with a girl like that, but for me, generally once I've been with a female for a few months, I'm ready to move on, and the female can be a far better person than I could hope to be. Maybe, my brain is broken from all those years of childhood drinking, as well as that drinking corresponding to Evangeline's death, or perhaps, that weird behavior is owing to the fact that my first lover was a Spanish prostitute, and I was not quite twelve. On the other hand, perchance that is actually how most males are made to be. After I left, Margo remarried twice, and bore three beautiful girls, and therefore received an entirely new universe. Her third husband, got mad one evening, and beat her severely, which first sent her to the hospital, and then into a serious depression. She somehow thought it was her fault that all her marriages had ended, or maybe she just says that, to be polite. Perchance, her only serious fault was that she just picked the wrong

guys, much as I've always picked the wrong women, except for Evangeline. Maybe all mistakes aren't really mistakes, at all. Perchance a 'bad' relationship is really the 'right thing,' at the time, but time has a way of moving on.

Margo's pet peeve was that her mom favored and spoiled her younger brother, Charley. Consequently, Margo favored her Dad, but longed for her mother's love. In Margo's mind, the brother was guilty of more aberrant behavior than she, and so her mother's preference was hurtfully unjust. It's fairly common for mothers to prefer their male children. Her father was a good man, who devoted his life's energies to supporting his wife, and patiently listening to Margo's vexation, concerning her mom's favoritism. Margo's father almost didn't exist outside his immediate family. My wife never seemed to get tired of complaining about her mother's bias, and I must admit, Margo was largely correct about her mom's bias. I always found her mother to be gracious and charming, but then I'm a male, and I admired her mother for her strength of character, if ever there was a strong willed...

On meth, everything is within your power, but

that's the first thing it destroys.

WA Morey

Before we married, Margo would repeatedly say that the last thing she ever wanted was kids. Once married, it only took her about a month to transition, from never wanting kids, to desperately wanting one. It's amazing what a simple ceremony can do, or maybe Margo was lying all along. I'm ashamed to say, that her unexpected transformation literally terrified me, and I instantly realized that I'd married the wrong woman. Back then, I was constantly working overtime, and barely making enough for Margo and I to survive, much less support a child. It crossed my mind that she might not be properly taking her birth control, so I began to cut back on having sex with her, and when I did cum, I made sure, I was outside her, which partially spoiled the fun, ergo my orgasm became something to fear.

As I said, she was intelligent, beautiful in face and figure, had a good heart, played the piano, had a degree in history, and was about 98 percent honest; certainly, much more honest than I. Having lived her whole life in Mobile, she knew my entire maternal family, far better than I did. Half of my Mobile

relatives she liked, and the other half, not so much. The one great thing that Margo did for me was that she saved me from the crushing depression of Evangeline's death, and for that I'm still immensely grateful.

I've shed a million tears at the mouth of a dead girl.

Hard Rain Falling, by Rio W. Dillard

Because of Evangeline's death, I had lost interest in sex. Maybe that was also owing to the corresponding huge amount of drinking. Perhaps, the strangest thing about her death was trying to say her name, nor could I recall the sound of her voice. As strange as it may seem, when no one was around, I'd try to say her name, and even then, it was hard to say her name; I could say her name in my head, but for some reason saying it out-loud was difficult. Normally, I called her 'Sweetie,' and I could say that, but not 'Evangeline.' Perhaps, I thought that by saying her name, it might make her ghost appear. My losing interest in sex was like a tiger dining on yogurt. I never told Margo about Evangeline's death,

only that her Dad had broken us up. Had I told her the truth, the questions would never have stopped. While saying her name was a glitch, discussing her death was out of the question. Margo allowed me to once again become a carnivore, helping me to rise from the proverbial ashes. My wife was the living instrument of my carnal resurrection, and truly saved me from myself. But sex with Margo was lovingly polite sex, albeit fairly energetic, it was not born of an impulsive deep-seated desire. What a wonderful, loving, and bright girl Margo was, but clearly the wrong girl for me.

Margo saved me from my second bout of serious depression, and for that kindness, I probably wasted a few years of her life. When I married her, and I sincerely meant to love her. But like I said, shortly after marriage, she did this crazy 180 degree turnaround, making it clear that she suddenly needed kids, and I hadn't changed about not wanting them, and couldn't imagine working harder than I already was. Managing the twenty black paperboys, proved that the old saying, 'hard work never killed anybody' was a lie; yes, I felt like the job was killing me. Margo's marked child-bearing metamorphosis, is a large part of what cooled my sexual interest in her.

Other women started looking much more interesting. For quite some time, I thought that Margo, being the intelligent woman she was, would sense my need to not be strapped with a kid, and change her mind, but no such luck. Realizing that every woman is entitled to her biological right to have a child, I began to feel somewhat guilty. Nevertheless, there was no way I could face working harder than I already was; especially, while stuck in Mobile.

Something tells me that her biological clock and her mother were behind Margo's sudden desire for kids. Her mother frequently raved on about grandkids. In those days, such behavior was considered the acceptable norm. Margo's change, from never wanting kids, to wanting them, was way too fast, and at first I thought she was just kidding, then I realized she was serious. While I began to think about leaving, I had too many irons in the fire, some of which were illegal. Besides, my parents lived in Mobile, as well as my friends, and other relatives. I was stuck. Mobile was the closest place, I've ever had to a home, but if that's true, conceivably I was never meant to have a home. Of all the places I've lived, I enjoyed Boulder, Colorado, and Barcelona, Spain the most, largely because of the indigenous

peoples. The mountains, the streams and lakes of Boulder are incredible, whereas the amazing architecture, and sheer number of structures in Barcelona are a never ending sources of beauty. But again, it's worth repeating that the people of those regions are the most attractive aspects of both places. It seemed to me, that the Spanish have the biggest hearts, and the students of Boulder are the most friendly, and easygoing. Of course, there are so very many places I've never seen. Certainly, there are also such people almost everywhere, but just not nearly as many.

One sultry afternoon, while driving through one of the ghetto areas of my newspaper district, I had a thousand hits of orange microdot, inside a piece of twisted cellophane, stashed in my car's blue metal ashtray. In effect, the car's cigarette receptacle contained the hallucinatory power of a small town of unmedicated stressed-out schizophrenics, who'd all gone without sleep for a week. The old blue and white *Ford* was a nondescript vehicle, which didn't attract the attention of the police.

The good thing about dealing acid (LSD) was that it came in extremely tiny units, so it was easy to hide large numbers of doses in a relatively small

space. One hit of orange microdot was half the size of your standard copper BB, so the thousand hits were easily concealed within a portion of the car's ashtray. I'd planned on selling them to a couple of my dealers that day, but the first one I'd tried to find wasn't at his job, and I had to get the kids throwing the newspapers, so for the time being, I was stuck with holding the hits in my car. Having the thousand microdots in the car made me nervous, since my district was always swarming with cops, because it was 95 percent black, and most of the cops were *KKK* in the 1970s, and so it was cop sport to lock-up as many blacks as possible.

Back then, acid wasn't looked-upon with the same disdain, that it is today. No one realized that it could bring-on schizophrenia in people with a predisposition. If you have schizophrenia in your family history, you probably should avoid: stress, large amounts of caffeine, all types of speed, all hallucinogens, and cocaine; then your odds of staying sane are vastly improved. Although, LSD seemed to hit its popularity peak in the late 1960s, the drug was still fairly popular in 1975, and for me it was a genuine money-maker, usually tripling or quadrupling my cash outlay. I could have made

more, but I tried to be generous with my dealers. For safety's sake, I only distributed to my dealers, and never sold drugs directly to an unknown individual. At least, not until that particular foolish day, when sheer exhaustion had clouded my meager reasoning.

In about ten minutes, my young life was going to undergo a terrifying shakeup; one which could easily have been my total downfall, and permanently scarred my psyche. While we all like to assume that we function with a certain dependable level of cognitive fitness, I can never really be too sure about mine, and that is another reason why it was best that I never seriously considered becoming a physician.

My alertness, and intelligence seem to vary significantly, likely due to my unreliable sleeping habits, which may somehow relate to my protracted childhood alcohol consumption. One day, my frontal lobes may to be purring along like a well tuned *LaFerrari hybrid hypercar*, and a few days later, my unpredictable three pounds of gray matter is sputtering along like a 1960 rusted-out *Ford Falcon*, firing on two or the four cylinders. That afternoon, when I would attempt to sell some of those drugs to a stranger, I was the rusty *Ford Falcon*, barely putt-putting along on four flat tires. Even though it was

over forty years ago, I still feel the fear, as well as a bit of shame, for that day's foolishness. My imbecilic deed should have landed me in prison.

The merciless brilliant summer sun was straight overhead, relentlessly beating-down on every Mobile building and street, casting them in a brilliant blaze of blinding white glare. No shadow was to be found. So bright and hot the day, and so dim my mind, that the most vivid colors were at best washed-out pastels. With no sunglasses, and having greenish blue eyes, I was somewhat susceptible to glare, and had spent most of the day squinting myself into a rather determined headache. The black Mobile ghetto was a blistering oven, which had me swimming in my clothes. My car had no air-conditioner, and I was being baptized by sweat, while every ounce of awareness and logic had been boiled right-out of my bemused sleep-deprived mind. My only desire was for that day to end, so I could shower and get some much needed sleep.

To avoid attracting the attention of the law, I drove the cheap unremarkable *Ford*, and dressed-in conventional clothes: your basic sweaty grey T-shirt, ubiquitous frayed cut-off jeans, and plain black tennis shoes. Other than my long hair, I was trying

my best to look like a young struggling impoverished wage slave... anything, but the up and coming drug dealer, I had been for the last two years; fortuitously, without so much as a hiccup encounter, with the local cops. Nevertheless, my mind was always imagining encounters, where I'd be stopped, and the various things I'd do and say to extricate myself.

The way I saw it back then, the long hair really stood for something, and I just couldn't give ground to that right wing community, and cut it. For me, the long hair meant that I saw through the bullshit domino motive for the war in Vietnam. Some Vietnam vets still hang onto that theory, but lets face it, we lost the war and the dominoes didn't fall. The hair said that I didn't like the idea that a bunch of military manufactures had highjacked the economy of the United States of America, the same country that my dear Dad had very nearly died protecting. Most of all, I didn't like the unnecessary deaths of fifty-thousand American GIs, and three million Vietnamese. Believe it or not, the hair spoke loudly of political awareness, so I was determined to keep my hair. The few remaining sparse strands I now shave, twice weekly.

In Mobile, two years was an extraordinarily long

time for a mid-level drug dealer to go undetected, and not be caught by the cops, and dragged through the courts, then put away in some state-owned concrete bunker with thick steel bars. There are about fifteen prisons in Alabama, but Alabama is in the top five states for the number of prisoners per capita, and as mentioned, America is the number one country on the planet for locking-up its citizens. So, what might that say about Alabama? When such control of the populace reaches a certain level, by definition, it becomes tyranny. My length of hair was my revolt, the right of revolution is the duty of people to overthrow a government, which acts against their interests or threatens the safety of people, without a just cause, and in my mind, the Vietnam war was anything but just.

In the next few minutes, my luck would falter, my sanity would cease to exist, and my paranoia would skyrocket. There was little doubt, because of Margo's need for a kid, that I would have left Mobile in a couple of years, but because of what was about to transpire, I moved up the departure date. Back then, big drug dealers rarely got busted, since they were generally friends with, and greased the palms of: certain cops, the sheriff, the occasional judge,

and/or some State Attorney. That was as long as the drug wasn't cocaine, for the white Columbian powder was strictly the purview of Mobile's wealthiest car dealer, and he was to be feared more than the police were. If you wanted to deal cocaine, you're better be working for the car dealer. Principally because he had an enthusiastic hit man, named Andy. No one was allowed to bring-in or sell cocaine, unless it was the car dealer. But as mentioned, my thing was only weed, hash, and a few hallucinogens, not addictive drugs. Being a small time dealer, I had to stay alert, but that day I was far from being on my toes.

A person, who was not in the employ of said car dealer, but got caught trying to move significant amounts of powder, could also be arrested by the police. However, if the arrested dealer seemed to have the right stuff (smart and tough), the sheriff might phone the car dealer, before the suspect was fingerprinted and an arrest report had been filed. If the car dealer needed another dealer, he might ask the sheriff not to file the report. The suspect would be driven to meet one of the car dealer's minions. The understanding being, that the guy would be considered for employment as a dealer or transporter

for the car dealer, but under his terms. If the car dealer didn't need a new dealer, the guy usually went to trial, and if found guilty, went to prison, depending on certain variables.

At that time, I was indeed getting to know a couple of cops in Mobile, just in case I got busted, though as yet, I hadn't actually gotten around to broaching the topic of bribery. My goal was to reach some high ranking investigator, so should I get busted, for a price, I might be able to avoid prosecution, and maybe even the initial arrest report. All the investigator had to do was to register you as a confidential informant. The bribed investigator only had to say that I was working for him, when I was arrested. But as stated, as yet, I hadn't approached a cop to protect me. Computers weren't used then, just pen and ink. There was one such detective, who worked-out at the YMCA, but I never got around to talking with him. Such a conversation takes considerable planning. However, there was a detective in New Orleans, who was friends with my drug supplier, who introduced me to the cop. I was told that if I got popped in New Orleans, I was simply to tell the jailers that I wanted to speak with said detective. The jailers all knew the routine. I'd be

placed in an interview room, to await his arrival, then he'd delete all existing paperwork, and turn me loose.

Finding a dirty cop, willing to be bribed in New Orleans, was like trying to find a piece of straw in a haystack. The trick was simply to engage anyone at the detective level, or higher, and hope they didn't want too much money or dope. The New Orleans detective, who had been arranged for me by my supplier, seemed like he was a hardcore drug addict. Meeting that New Orleans detective had been somewhat unnerving. But regardless, with what was about to happen that day in Mobile, I would be so shaken-up, that I would soon leave the United States.

As mentioned, the big-time cocaine dealer in Mobile owned several car dealerships. His son used his father's twin engine plane, a new Super King Air. The plane departed Colon, Panama to regularly bring-in kilos of the pure powder, landing on a small grass strip, just north of the Mobile. Other times, they'd drive a car, with its trunk filled with the kilos, up from Miami. The only reason I was allowed to know these things was that I was friends with the car dealer's aforementioned hitman, and I'd known him, long before the car dealer. One night after a party at

the car dealership, all the guests had left and the sun was about to come-up, the hitman covertly snuck me into one of the car dealer's back offices, unlocked the door, and showed me the clear wrapped packages of cocaine, and the many banded stacks of hundred dollar bills. The amount of wealth in that office was impressive. The well armed hitman was supposed to be guarding the illicit treasure trove, but he couldn't resist showing it to me. One desk was covered in cash, paper-banded stacks of hundreds. Each banded stack was twenty-five thousand dollars, and I estimated there were approximately six hundred such stacks, circa fifteen millions dollars. The other desk was covered in the clear wrapped bundles of powder, each bundle was five kilos. There were around two hundred such bundles, stacked on and around that desk. Back then, cocaine went for about thirty-thousand per kilo. So there was approximately thirty-million dollars worth of cocaine. Nevertheless, while the hitman's chest swelled with misplaced pride, showing off the cash and drugs, I saw them as nothing less than bundles of saran-wrapped poison; still, the stacks of cash were intriguing.

This felonious affluent display was designed to persuade me to become one of the local cocaine

dealers, working for the car dealer, under the supervision of my friend, the hitman. Still, I never liked the idea of dealing addictive drugs, so I politely thanked the friendly hitman for wanting to introduce me to the rich car dealer, but I politely refused the offer, even though the dealer provided protection against the local cops, as well as the resident feds. (The feds didn't really bust many folks in 1975.) It is difficult to imagine that so much cocaine could now be in the US, without the involvement of corrupt officials.

Back then, the drugs which I dealt were not considered addictive or pernicious, but I'd later come to realize that the hallucinogens were somewhat dangerous for people, who had a predisposition for mental illness. Anyway, I didn't want to deal cocaine, and certainly not for the notorious car dealer. Moreover, I preferred having my own set of dealers. Certainly my drugs were not as profitable as cocaine, but I was my own boss, and then, felt like I wasn't harming anyone. The fact, that my supplier lived in another city, appealed to me. I suppose this admission, of drug dealing, may mean that I won't ever be able to attain my life's goal of heading-up the *National Association of Chiefs of Police*, but the way

things are looking lately, POTUS may still be within my reach.

The now deceased, the wealthy cocaine and car dealer has a fine young grandson, whom I've lately been trying to persuade to write a book about his family's nefarious exploits. If the book ever gets published, it would make *The Sopranos*, look like *Mr. Rogers*. It never ceases to amaze me how many interesting stories go unwritten. Even though, every time I see the grandson, I encourage him to write, it will probably never happen; still, maybe he'll put it off until he's an old guy, like me.

The blindingly sweltering day, combined with the paucity of sleep, had me feeling grimy, drowsy and confused. To counteract the stifling misery, I tried pretending that I was sweating in some luxurious sauna at an opulent Mediterranean spa, shelling out ten thousand bucks a day, to be allowed to sweat and exude impurities from my spiritually and chemically contaminated body. Maybe the fantasy worked for a few seconds, but it swiftly faded, and once again, I was perspiring my ass off in boring Mobile... sweating to death in the blinding 95 degree heat, slaving for the local newspaper, driving through the ghetto areas, praying that I wasn't going

to end-up with a severe raging case of jock-itch. A redneck construction worker once told me that jock-itch was the state disease of Alabama, termites the state insect, incest the state crime, and lynching blacks the state pastime. He actually thought he was being humorous, since he'd also supply the laughter, minus my accompaniment.

Driving down DeHeller's Street, I was searching for one of my paperboys, Eddie. He'd missed throwing his paper route that morning. Worse yet, I hadn't been able to find the semi-psychic Pig to help locate him. Generally, I'd find Eddie asleep under someone's porch, in some random garage, in an unlocked car, or sometimes under a house, but rarely, if ever, in his own bed, if you could call it a bed. Once I found him sleeping in an old lady's flower bed, making me recall the time, when I'd been drunk and slept in the leaf mulch in front of my parent's home, years before, during my days of rat racing.

Eddie's mother, was nicknamed Bit, short for Little Bit. Indeed, she was a short little bit of a woman. While a nice and pretty enough prostitute, she had a serious drug and alcohol addiction. Actually, she used anything addicting. But Bit had

too many men coming in and out of their little home at night, for Eddie to enjoy sleeping in his own bed. She was a sexy jet black woman, and so her track marks could only be discerned by the bumps created by the small inflamed swellings, abscesses, or the older hypertrophic scars left from healed infections. The woman obviously needed the money for the heroin, but oddly enough, she also enjoyed her job as a sex worker. She slept with men and women.

Eddie said that he had several brothers and sisters, and there just wasn't room for him in the filthy dilapidated dump, he called home. Surprisingly, the boy very much loved his strange little hooker mom, and so did his brothers and sisters. Perhaps, it's all just a matter of what you grow-up with... early programing; perhaps, it's all hard wired. Eddie's one-story wooden home was falling apart, and beyond squalid. It wasn't too different from a New York City trash barge, without the seagulls.

After a night of repeated hooking and shooting-up the Mexican brown heroin, his mom would give her kids a few bucks for food, then she'd crash on her stained worn-out mattress and sleep, until well into the late evening; then, it was time to go back to the

streets. For her there were no holidays, and no days off. The only interruption in her routine was the occasional brief stint in jail. To meet her customers, she hovered around a local package store and bar. All the paperboys knew her and would tell her hello, while she was out working the stroll. The kids treated her as they might any other working mom. They never gave Eddie any crap about his mom's drug habit or profession. A few weeks prior, I'd accompanied Eddie into his home to talk to one of his brothers, about starting a paper-route. After entering the filthy crumbling structure, I noticed that one of the bedrooms was literally missing half of its floor, the hundreds of winding grooves in the remaining wood screamed, termites. The bugs had literally eaten half the floor, and had built mud stacks and channels, running-up the brick columns, which supported the house. There were parts of the wooden structure which meant with the ground, hence there the termites gained a direct access to the wood of the home. You could look through the huge portion of missing floor, and see the dusty earth, four feet below.

Eddie's brothers and sisters treated this missing floor, as just another passageway into and out of the

hovel. Steps had been created by a pair of stacked cinderblocks to help the kids climb in and out. For more than a year, their water had been turned off, hence the bathroom was beyond abysmal. The toilet was more like an impossibly complex study in advanced microbiology. In place of the toilet, the kids had resorted to digging holes under the house. Children can adapt to almost anything. When a hole was half full, they'd fill it in with the dirt, and simply dig a new hole. They had no money to get the water turned back-on, or the plumbing fixed, and the mother didn't worry about much of anything, only her heroin and a few bucks for the kids to eat on. Everything else was of no consequence. Their mom was the cleanest of the family, because at least once an evening, one of her tricks would rent a room, where she could shoot her drugs and bathe. The kids used a neighbor's hose for bathing and drinking. Bit had 'arranged' it with the man next-door, so her kids could the use his hose.

The heroin addiction made the mother seem selfish, and so it would have been easy to criticize, but then, I was only twenty-four, and knew nothing about her neurochemical plight. Heroin, first called diamorphine, was originally (1874) synthesized by

CR Alder Wright, working at St. Mary's Hospital Medical School in London. He was boiling morphine in various acids, trying to make a new more potent compound. To make heroin, he'd simply boiled anhydrous morphine with acetic anhydride. Later, the drug was marketed over-the-counter as a cough suppressant, and indeed it is.

In 1898, the new drug was trademarked by Friedrich Bayer & Co. under the trade-name Heroin. The name was taken from the Greek 'heros,' to imply that the drug would imbue heroic qualities upon its user; indeed, in most people, the drug does block fear. While heroin suppressed the parts of the brain, representing the phenomenon of fear, chronic use of the drug, leaves abuser more prone to fear and paranoia, when not on the drug. Heroin binds to the same receptors that the nature endogenous beta-endorphin binds to. Like heroin, beta-endorphin blocks fear and pain, and slows the heart. If the body produces too much beta-endorphin, it can easily stop the heart; so, shock/stress can kill. Likewise, too much heroin can also result in a fatal overdose

Now, after a few years of education, I realize that heroin, as well as drugs like methamphetamine, cocaine, xanax, alcohol, nicotine, adderall, etc., first

diminish the very part of the brain, which the addict needs to rid themselves of the drug. Heroin gradually, or not so gradually, destroys the 'motivational' parts of the brain, i.e., the *Substantia Nigra*. Some of the dopaminergic brain cells may actually die, and others just don't function optimally. This depends on things like the amount of drug abused, the duration of addiction, the individual's particular physiology, drug contaminants, aspects of the blood-brain-barrier, liver function, etc. That group of brain cells is the bastion of the brain which operate, by releasing the well known neurochemical dopamine, and they are responsible for things like: fine motor coordination, euphoria, drive, motivation, wherewithal, will-power, happiness, etc.

Once the group of neurons called the *Substantia Nigra*, and some of its related structures, begin to run a functional low of the neurotransmitter called dopamine, there goes the addict's drive and motivation. It's the end of their willpower, their joy, and the absence of those things is in essence craving, the desire to feel better/normal. Without adequate levels of dopamine there goes their ability to 'kick' their drug habit. That's why addictive drugs are tough to give-up, for without those drugs, the addict

feels worthless and depressed, and they're left without drive and motivation, the very parts of their brain needed to kick the drug habit has been damaged by the drug. Correspondingly, the drug-induced reduction in brain dopamine is what causes the factor of craving. Furthermore, if the dopamine levels get low enough in some brain areas, designed to dampen motor impulses, tremors may set-in, something called drug-induced Parkinsonism.

Again let me say, that heroin destroys the very parts of the brain, which the addict needs to recover, hence heroin is more than a bit like *AIDS*. The latter disease destroys the parts of the body the victim needs to fight the associated cancer or infection, your immune system. In a functional manner, the *Substantia Nigra* is the brain's immunity against drugs. Drugs destroy it first, and so the brain becomes helpless to stop using the drug. Heroin, cocaine, alcohol, xanax, amphetamines, etc., destroy the very thing the addict needs to fight their addiction, dopaminergic neurons. Consequently, I've always found it more than slightly coincidental that heroin is a major vector for *AIDS*. In addition, both conditions appear partially incurable, when it fact, they are both quite curable. If you read further, into

these disorganized, poorly written, books, you may get to the cures for addiction and *AIDS*, as well as cures for other diseases.

Bit, the beautiful little black prostitute, probably never kicked her heroin habit; nevertheless, that sad habit may have helped to create the indomitable spirit of her destitute children. Poverty is usually not known for its ability to produce joyfulness, but it can have it's benefits. In order to be happy and successful you generally need: good genes, doting parents, a good job, to be fairly smart, and then, it also helps to have luck.

Still, those kids with their abysmal living conditions usually appeared to be content; the poverty didn't seem to dishearten them; but then, they'd been born into it, and knew nothing else. As mentioned, under the privacy afforded by the darkness, they'd sneak into neighbors' yards, and use the hose to bath, and drink from. Eddie ate whatever was available: candy, cookies, doughnuts, cheap burgers, a piece of fried chicken, dumpster food, etc. As a child, Eddie smoked, but couldn't afford to buy cigarettes, so he smoked used butts, he'd find on the ground, or in public ashtrays, yet he never got sick. He must have had an immune system like a vulture.

Whenever, we'd pass a public ashtray or butt-can, he'd stop and survey the pickings, often pull one out, then gently pull and straighten it, wipe the filtered end on his shirt to sanitize it, then light-up. Eddie's life was the perpetual pursuit of food scraps and cigarette butts.

Whenever he'd run across a large cache of food, he'd bring it home to his siblings. They were forever smelling their food to make sure it hadn't begun to rot. Often their food was something, which had been tossed out into the trashcans, behind *The Blue Coastline Deli*, or taken from the dumpster behind some fast food joint. As long as I knew Eddie, I don't believe he ever had a real home cooked meal... not once.

Later, when I saw Simon Beaufoy's movie, *Slumdog Millionaire*, I thought of Eddie and his family... my heart sadly ached, both for the kids I'd worked with, as well as for the Indian children in that movie. Despite all that struggle and penury, Eddie's energy was meteoric. Millionaires, who have suffered the loss of their money, may put a bullet through their brain or jump out of a window, but Eddie would become ecstatically happy, if he simply found an edible hamburger in the trash, or retrieved

a discarded half smoked cigarette butt. Whenever he rode in my car, he immediately took control of the radio, tuned-in the only black station in Mobile, maxed-out the volume, grin from ear to ear, as he thrashed around in the front seat, in time with the music. Helping Eddie to throw his paper-route usually gave me a headache; nonetheless, it was amazing to witness just how ecstatic a desperately poor child could be, all because of a little music, and a brief ride in the car.

Rarely did my needy black paperboys complain. They were good to one another, and to a fault, they were kind to me. If I did them a small favor, they treated me like a God. When I'd treat them to doughnuts, you'd have thought I'd bought them dinner at the *Ritz*. They could humble me, at a time in my life, when I didn't know the meaning of the word. You might say they were the zen masters of friendship, displaying genuine concern for each other. All except for the aforementioned Fifty Cents, who was remarkably selfish, but I think he was simply an outlier, broken at birth. Maybe his dad received an x-ray for a broken coccyx.

For some people, when you have nothing of material value, your family and friends become your

only true treasures. Conversely, the more money you have, the more time you spend playing with your investments, and the less time you have to consider others. I'd seen such relationships in poverty stricken Spain, and soon I'd again see this same warm-heartedness in the impoverished people of Mexico. Quite possibly, no money means there's no point in focusing on it, and so you begin to think more about people. Not all poor people are that way, but those who are, can often behave as saints. All of Eddie's family and most of the other paperboys had notable dental problems, but the associated tooth pain didn't seem to faze them. While I'm sure it hurt, they just didn't let it get in the way of things. Perchance, growing up with pain, makes it easier for the person to ignore it, or to just accept it as part of life. Indeed, the paperboys were remarkable in what they could withstand.

The paperboys never cast judgment on me, nor I on them, except for the aforementioned psychopathic Fifty Cents. No cop, lawyer, social worker, soldier, doctor, scientist, or judge, whom I've known, has endured the torturous lives my paperboys led, and so in a very real way those kids were more impressive, than most people I've known, save for perhaps my

Dad. In my mind, their friendships were legendary. Judging from my current observations, I no longer feel that such sincere camaraderie exists among young black kids. Sometimes I think it's because this lack of mutual respect is due to reduced self-esteem. Perhaps, that's why they are sometimes quick to blame others for their life's situation.

Soon, I would leave those paperboys, my family, my dealers and friends, and backwoods Mobile; not to return for more than thirteen years. To this day, I still wonder what happened to Bit and her kids. By the time I returned to Mobile, her house had disappeared; gentrification had transformed it into a small office complex. Except for one, all the paperboys were not to be found. How I found that one was the result of a very strange encounter.

One evening, I was making my way down a dark Mobile alleyway to attend a concert. There were no parking spaces close to the theater, so I'd been forced to park several blocks away. I was running late, cutting through the unlit alley, squeezing between a recessed doorway and the side of a large parked van. That's when my peripheral vision barely picked-up something moving fast just on my left, in the shadowy recess of the doorway. Instinctually, I

ducked, and the punch barely missed my head, and slammed into the van, oil-canning the metal siding, ergo the man lost his balance. Swiveling my head and body to the left and looking up, I saw his face in the moonlight. Even in the extremely dim light, I instantly recognized the unmistakable features of one of my paperboys, and by then, he'd grown-up into a massively powerful man, who was trying to mug me. It may seem highly improbable, but I recognized him in a split second, without having seen him, for more than fourteen years, and without his having uttered a word. He was then about twenty-seven years old. Quickly, I shouted-out his name, and immediately he too recognized me, even in the dusky light, and even after all those years. He shouted my name in return. That night, I canceled going to the concert. He took me to his Grandma's house, where she fixed us some dinner, while he and I talked about when we'd worked together, and what had transpired during the fourteen years, since we'd last seen each other. Most of those years, he'd spent in prison, largely for strong arm robberies.

My child, Elizabeth, wasn't born, until I was almost forty-four, but even today she'd tell you that even though I'm white and sixty-five years old, I get

along best with black males, regardless of whether they are law-abiding. It's no that I'm like them, it's mainly owing to the fact that for some reason they are kind to me; perchance, because I led-out with respect, and don't attempt to judge them, nor do I approach them with ill-placed apprehension. She can also testify to the fact that most black males tend to be good to me, regardless of whether or not they are law abiding.

And at risk of the reader thinking me foolish, in most cases, I don't care about their criminal past. This is not to say that I don't think that people should follow the law, for when possible, I do believe that they should. But I am smart enough to realize that the law is one thing, and real life is another, and poverty is tougher than most people realize. You don't need a law or a written statute to realize a moral absolute, and law enforcement often has too little to do with justice, and sometimes doesn't jive with a person's need to survive. As a rule, I prefer those who follow the law, but even though it may seem oxymoronic, there are many good, if not outstanding, people who don't. Just as heavenly bodies may bend light, so may life at times bend the man-made rules. Judgement is such a tricky thing,

partially because its interpretation resides in that highly faltering stuff called gray matter. My gray mush thinks it's important to give people a second chance. Believe it or not, some people are quite capable of change, though I must admit some aren't. If they're not, we should probably never allow any felon to go free. That's not to say, there aren't those people, who aren't best avoided. The trick is to be able to discern the difference. Too many people don't want to take a chance on an unknown. Some people feel that they work too hard, to run the risk on dealing with a questionable person. But, what about all those people with felonies, which are constantly being told that they need to get a job, and earn their way in the world, yet no one's willing to give them a chance?

People often complain about the country's current level of unemployment. Some say that it's an important indicator of the America's economic health. Figures from *The Justice Department* claim that about 11.3% of all men have been to prison, and that doesn't include all those guys, who are guilty of felonies, but who don't yet have the points, to go to prison, and just got time served, fines, and/or probation. All toll, about 20% of American males

have at least one felony. If people won't hire them, then how will we ever get unemployment down? These numbers do not include the female felons. Furthermore, this is not to mention that automation, robotics, and computers are also reducing the number of available jobs, and of course there's the big contributor to unemployment... cheap overseas 'sub-slaves.' These are foreign peoples, who are actually treated worse than slaves of old, since many of the ole southern slave owners at least took good care of their investments, but not so with today's cheap foreign employees. How will we ever get unemployment to drop, since our country's population continues to grow, while more poor people pour across our southern border, who are more than willing to work. These are people, who haven't had their incentive to work destroyed by welfare.

In some fashion, we might need to resurrect the old *Civil Conservation Corps* (1933-1943), an employment program which had been part of Roosevelt's *New Deal*, providing manual labor jobs for unemployed men, between the ages of 18 to 25. Perhaps, with improved healthcare and people living longer, we might extend the age range, and make it

18 to 35. Lord knows that America has plenty of bad roads, crumbling overpasses, questionable viaducts, aging bridges, leaky sewer systems, as well as national, state, and local parks, almost all of which are being taken care of by corrupt contractors, who furnish kickbacks to corrupt state and federal politicians. Government run programs, like the *Civil Conservation Corps*, could be managed similar to present-day military boot camps, but without all the screaming, no making the recruits into killers, without the humiliating and demeaning crap, and perhaps with a bit of humanity and positive reinforcement stirred-in. All the books and accounting of this massive employment project should be published online and therefore be completely open to public scrutiny. We might therefore avoid some of the political payoffs and kickbacks. Such labor groups could also be involved in building/constructing such things as: solar generators, wind farms, geothermal power stations, and parts for electric and fuel efficient vehicles, as well as other things which might help the planet to recover. Most of the extremely hot sources of geothermal activity are in the western states and Hawaii. Hot spots are volcanoes and fumaroles (holes where volcanic gases are released), hot springs, and

geysers. If we didn't have a defense budget, which was more than twice the combined defense budgets of China and Russia, we might could pay the aforementioned laborers a living wage. In addition, we have a police force which is about twice what is needed; especially if we implemented the C-DAD program, described in the chapter entitled, Ending The Drug Problem, near the end of book seven. In fact, with C-DAD we could do so much more: free medical care, free advanced education, raise the minimum wage, etc.

https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Civilian_Conservation_Corps

While married, I quickly became tired of the low paying work-a-day world. It wasn't hard to look into the near future and see that, even with a promotion to a newspaper circulation supervisor, in Mobile, I was going to die an old man, still struggling in the lower middle class; in debt, having done nothing of any significance, and bored out of my gourd. One year into the job, I was thoroughly burned-out with being a newspaper delivery manager. There was just no effective way to get ahead; all I could do was to

make enough to get by. To help break the monotony of marriage and work, as well as to get ahead financially, I made the deliberate choice to deal illegal drugs. That job choice fell into my lap, as a result of an unplanned encounter with a highly successful big time drug dealer, from nearby New Orleans.

Opportunity may knock in a threatening manner.

The Time to Jump by Moray Will Adrian

It wasn't long after meeting the dealer in a restaurant, and I'd acquired my own twelve distributors to pedal my illicit wares. The twelve dealers were all quite different... black, white, male, female, gay, straight, brave, paranoid, etc. Nevertheless, all twelve were smart and ambitious, and without any criminal history. Hiring a dumb drug dealer is begging to be locked-up. Having diverse dealers meant they could sell to diverse groups, and thereby be less likely to compete with each other, and vend more product. More people deal drugs than the average person might imagine. Among white adolescents, rates of drug dealing are

about 4.5% for males and 2% for females. Among black adolescents, drug dealing rates are about 6.4% and 1.6%, males and females, respectively. Those percentages add-up to millions of American dealers, more than 10 million illegal drug dealers! *Walmart* hires about 2 million employees, and so about five times the number of all the *Walmart* employees deal drugs. Of course, many of the drug dealers are listed on the unemployment roles. Could so many drug dealers possibly mean that there aren't enough reasonable jobs?

<http://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pmc/articles/PMC2871399/>

Of course, I kept my wife, relatives, and friends, in the dark, concerning my larger drug sales. After all, in the illegal drug trade, loose lips can quickly eclipse your freedom. I made it clear to my wife and couple of my friends and some of the younger members of my family, that I only sold an ounce of weed, every now and then; nothing that would attract the attention of the police. Being a master of deceit, I once divided-up a pound of kush in the living room in front of my wife, and a couple of

friends, and pretended it was a huge paranoid deal, giving them the impression that I didn't do anything other than rarely sell a little weed. By doing that, if they happened to see me in certain unusual locations, speaking with questionable looking individuals, I could play it off, later claiming that I was selling an ounce of weed, or just a few joints.

One of my cousins was the only person, with whom I slightly confided, but even then, only slightly. He and I often smoked weed together and on a few occasions did small amounts of meth. Oddly enough, neither of us ever got addicted. While he and I did small does (1-2 mg) together, I did a couple of fair sized doses (10 and 25 mg) on my own, but never felt the slightest need to continue to use the treacherous substance. Had I known the addiction dangers of methamphetamine, not to mention, the damage it can do to your brain and overall health, I never would have tried the stuff. On the whole, I'm glad I did it the few times that I did. To this day, I think it made me more fully realize just how much my mind was capable of creating. Still, perhaps some of my many failings, a few of which are chronicled in these texts, are in part attributable to those interesting white crystals. Some of my brightest

friends did meth, yet oddly enough, only one of them, a psychiatrist, became addicted. However, the same can't be said for meth smokers.

The time I did the 25 mg dose, miraculously I was able to read a book written in German in about ten hours, and prior to reading it, I didn't speak the language. On meth, I translated the language as one might break a code. Words and pieces of certain German words are similar to those in English, a few had Latin-like derivatives, and some seemed somewhat like Spanish. Small words in the center of sentences were conjunctions. Names of people and places were often clearly evident. Redundancies in words and phrases, in different parts of the text, became clues. Redundant small words could be prepositions. Prepositional phrases were usually bracketed by commas. The word for 'the' doesn't have any real meaning, but it's so frequently used, it was easy to pick-out.

In those days, there were no magazine articles, and no depressing TV documentaries, describing the side effects and dangers of meth addiction. Poisonous explosive meth houses, and rail thin addicts with seriously bad teeth were relatively unheard of. Meth had been used by many in Hitler's military, his tank

crews, as well as nearly all of his pilots. The 'pilot's chocolate,' as it was called, was packaged as round flat methamphetamine (meth) tablets, in roles, much like life-savers. For some reason, pharmaceutical grade meth, didn't seem to be a corresponding post-war addiction problem, or at least none which is widely written about, albeit there are a few letters to the contrary, but only a few.

<http://www.thedailybeast.com/articles/2015/09/10/uncovered-records-show-nazis-were-high-on-meth.html>

<https://www.theatlantic.com/technology/archive/2013/05/pilots-salt-the-third-reich-kept-its-soldiers-alert-with-meth/276429/>

So why now, are there so many meth addicts? Probably, because there are so many people, who now smoke meth, as opposed to taking the pill form. When a person smokes meth, the high is more intense, and only lasts about 100 minutes. If it's taken orally the effect is less but lasts about eight hours. Maybe there were addicts back in WWII, and they just didn't get widely reported, or maybe when

the war ended the supply just stopped, and the addicts just assumed they had the flu, or just figured they were depressed over losing the war, when in fact they were going through withdrawals, and post-withdrawal depression. Possibly all the meth making chemists fled Germany, and their factories had been destroyed by the bombing; after all, the bombing pretty well leveled Germany.

On the other hand, there is the very real possibility that the pure pharmaceutical form of methamphetamine is not as addicting as is the more poisonous stuff, made in those ever exploding poisonous meth houses. Nevertheless, the one person I knew, who did become a meth addict was a medical doctor, and he used the pure pharmaceutical grade meth. He used meth to escape his own fear, ergo his addiction came about under extreme duress, living every day under the threat of death, by a world renown murderous sociopath. Idi Amin Dada Oumee (1925-2003), the president of Uganda, frequently called, the 'Butcher of Uganda.' Said psychiatrist friend of mine is discussed later in these books.

In those drug dealing days, when I was married and working for the newspaper in Mobile, I didn't use *FDIC* insured banks to stash my drug dealing

profits, nor did I think about hiding my money at home. Banks were only for depositing my humble bimonthly paychecks, and for appearances sake, I'd make small withdrawals, so that there appeared to be no significant savings. Not to divulge my drug earnings, I only spent a tiny percentage of my illegal profits: small gifts for my wife and friends, tires for the car, taking the paperboys to eat more often, better groceries, etc. Such expenditures went unnoticed. Like the old Jewish commander had taught me, I buried my valuables and drug dealing profits in large quart-sized glass Mason jars. My jars contained such things as: paper money, gold and silver bullion coins (purchased from individuals, without a receipt), jewelry, collector coins (bought from private collectors needing money, with no receipt); and still, in other jars, I'd sometimes bury drugs: acid, mescaline, hash, weed, and rarely various amphetamines. The large Mason jars were perfect containers for burying things. Generally, I'd buried them inside a large plastic bag, closed with a simple knot in the top of the bag, after making sure, that I'd gotten all the air out of the bag.

One day, I was looking for some lumber to build a greenhouse for my wife, and found the dirty old

Mason jars under my deceased Great Aunt Betty's antique home on Mobile's Mallard Street. Using the hose, I washed them out, then stood them upside down on bricks under the house, so they could dry-out. The jars had flat rubberized lids with brass/tin screw-on holding-rims. Said jars are usually used for canning preserves and pickles, though I'd never known my Aunt to do such. It was probably one of those things she planned on doing, but just never got around to it. If you're not too careful, life can be like that, gone before you can enjoy it. Many people have such shortcomings; I've always wanted to learn how to sail, to sail the oceans, but as of yet, I've not been sailing. As a child, I greatly enjoyed reading various adventure books, which revolved around sailing, such things as, famous sea battles of the seventeen and eighteen hundreds, and about some of the early sea explorers.

Before putting the Mason jar in a plastic bag and burying it, I'd sometimes use a little duct tape to better seal the jar lid. Dad had indirectly given me the idea, when he told me that duct tape was used, during the war, to water-proof the metal ammunition boxes. Engaging mother earth as my bank, I never had to worry about overdraft charges, waiting in

long teller lines, bank robberies, bank closures on weekends or holidays, bank errors, police investigation, or federal taxes. Dirt-banking might still be a great idea. You might want to give it some thought.

Safety deposit boxes are subject to court-ordered search and seizure. Banks can fail, and close their doors, or if they think a depression is coming they can just close-up shop and keep your money. If you have cash and you don't want a banking or brokerage record, and you worry that your house might get ransacked by a bugler or a corrupt police official, or burn to the ground, consider buying some mason jars and digging some holes, just don't develop amnesia and forget where you dug them. Be careful, who you tell where you buried things, if you decide to tell anyone, at all. Now days, with cheap, highly accurate GPS devices, your hiding place can simply be, an easily encrypted, string of numbers. If you plan on leaving paper money in the ground for an extended time, consider putting packets of desiccants (drying agents) and anti-fungal powders in the jar. Paper can rot/decay, if only left too long in a sealed jar. Wrap the jar in several sealed plastic bags. If you live in a region, where the ground can freeze,

consider using a non-glass container, since the freezing can break the glass.

It's best not to mention the location to anyone. Your friend or loving relative, can unexpectedly become your enemy. If you want the contents of the jar to go to someone when you die, just draft a letter with excellent details, on where to dig. Again, coded accurate GPS coordinates are ideal. Seal the letter inside another sealed letter and leave it with a paid attorney to be given to, or mailed to, or handed to the person of your choosing, upon your death. Of course, there's the small issue of the trustworthiness of the attorney. In which case, you write the letter in code, and leave the code key, with whomever you want to receive the treasure. There are several other scenarios you can probably come-up with, to better assure that the buried jars gets to, whomever you choose.

Selecting the proper place to bury the Mason jar was often not a piece of cake. There were many things to be considered. Does the area flood, so the jars might come floating up after the next big rain or hurricane? Could people near the area see or hear me digging? Even if you decide to bury the jar at night, there is the remote possibility that someone's

wearing night vision goggles, since so many hunters and military personnel now have them. Digging can be difficult if the selected place has tree roots or is too rocky. Another consideration was whether the selected land could be sold and a building's foundation or a parking lot constructed over the top of the jars? Could a road be put through the area? What are the dependable points of reference, so that I could later relocate the jar? (Prior to GPS, relocation could be more difficult than you might imagine.) Would I have to drive a long time to get there? Would I have to walk far from where I parked the car? (This was often a problem.) Would I have to park in a place where my unattended car might seem conspicuous and attract unwanted attention? Could I easily bury it deep enough that a metal detector couldn't find the metal jar lid or the metal stored inside the jar? In response to this last concern, I usually scattered handfuls of random old rusty screws, nuts, bolts, and nails, over the buried jar, and for yards over the surrounding area. I'd purchase boxes of those rusty items for practically nothing at yard sales.

Frequently, places near railroad tracks were ideal. It was easy to mark a wooden railroad tie with

indelible paint, or by notching it with a hatchet, to help relocate the buried jar. I'd just bury the jar so many feet straight-out from the notched or marked railroad tie. Railroad tracks don't tend to be built in flood zones and those steel tracks don't move too often, the land doesn't get sold, and nothing gets built on top of those areas, since the railroad usually owns the land for a goodly distance on either side of the track, and rail tracks often pass through unpopulated areas, where you're less apt to be seen, when digging. Plus, if a train should show-up, it makes enough noise, that you get adequate warning. Federal lands aren't too bad, either. Of course, if what's in the Mason jar is illegal, and said jar is discovered on federal land, various other legal complications come into play. Said complications aren't necessarily all bad. It's advisable to always wear gloves, when handling the jar or its contents. Also, whenever possible, get hairs from other people, with whom you're not affiliated, and leave a few of them in the jar... yet another confounding variable for the police, should the jar be discovered. To find the hairs, look on the floor of your local jail's bathroom; that way, the DNA is more apt to hit on someone with a criminal record. Also, don't use a hair which is the same color as yours. Another

confounding factor might be to get some clothes fibers, from some clothes at a thrift store to leave in the jar.

The number of jars I had buried varied, generally between six and eight. Since a shovel was too big and noticeable, when walking to and from the various sites, I used a simple rusty garden hand-trowel, with a rough wooden handle. Both the Mason jars and the hand trowel, I carried in a very small nondescript backpack, like a day hiker might use, and I dressed and moved as if I were hiking. Often, I'd have stopped at a fast food place, bought my lunch, to carry it in the back pack. I'd also put the drugs or money in the bottom of the backpack, covering it with a couple cans of coke, and napkins, burgers, and fries. If people seemed to pay me notice, I'd act like I hadn't seen them, and instantly abandoned the effort. The backpack and hand trowel, I kept in the car's trunk. If you were ever stopped by a cop, and they found an old rusty trowel and a cheap backpack in your car... no problem. Just don't get stopped with too much cash, or the aforementioned drugs; in which case, I'd wash the car, dress conservatively, not wear sunglasses, wouldn't drive more than four miles an hour over the speed limit, make full stops at

stop signs, play country music on the radio, and if a cop drove by, I'd look him briefly in the eye, give him a friendly nod, without appearing to be tense, or too friendly. As best I recall, that only happened twice. Never bury anything, when you're stoned. I found that out the hard way. While high on weed, I once buried a bunch of chemistry equipment, I'd purchased at the Mobile flea market, and from various yard sales, to make small amounts of meth.

Having buried the chemistry equipment in the woods at the base of a tree, between two large protruding roots, which formed a near perfect forty-five degree angle, for the life of me, I later couldn't find said tree. The woods were filled with trees with similar such roots and root patterns. After hours of searching, I finally gave up. That fortuitous blunder caused me to forever abandon making meth, and knowing what I now know about meth, it's just as well. Even though I synthesized very little, I deeply regret doing so, especially now that I realize how damaging the stuff actually is.

For me, procuring the chemistry equipment had been the hardest part of making the meth. In those days, no one monitored the precursor compounds used for the synthesis of meth. Obtaining the recipe

from the references cited in the *Merck Manual* was a snap. Of course, all that has changed, now. The laws have changed, as well. While meth is indeed a dangerous drug, it nonetheless can have its emergency uses. In those days, Monty Daniels one of my friends, who was just a normal guy struggling to find his path in life, seemed completely content with doing hard physical labor, as a life-long profession. He worked for various building contractors, as a laborer, and because of his strength and large frame, they gave him the heaviest parts of each task, lifting the biggest pieces of lumber, carrying heavy rolled roofing, stacks of shingles, carrying and stacking bags of concrete, carrying bricks, digging-up yards, laying sod, etc.

Certainly there is nothing wrong with hard physical labor. In fact, in certain ways it's to be admired, but it's inarguably a bad selection for the long haul, since no matter how tough one's physiology, the human body can only take so many years of hard physical abuse, before one's back, knees, and various other joints begin to deteriorate, and without medical insurance, or a dependable retirement check, the results can make for a poor and miserably painful old age.

Monty, who was a couple of years my junior, seemed to trust me, and gave me too much credit for almost everything I suggested, so I tried hard never let him down, or steer him wrong. Infrequently, I would give Monty small amounts of meth, one, two, or three milligrams, never really telling him it was meth. I'd just say it was a caffeine tablet, with B vitamins. Then, while the corresponding stimulation of the meth was setting in, I'd begin talking about the importance of finishing college, how to study, and various educational things I'd found to be interesting. That was done in an effort to inspire him to continue in his schooling, even though the effort was a bit of a lie, for in all honesty, I didn't care too much about academics, then. Much later, I'd fall hard for the study of neurophysiology. And since Monty was a bit opinionated and rough cut, I also tried to teach him how to get along with people, how to be considerate and polite, to acknowledge people's goodness, as well as the importance of being a good listener, not interrupt and to honestly consider what another person had to say. Those lessons were easy, since all I had to do was be kind to him, be appreciative of his better nature, compliment his good deeds, and listen to whatever he had to say. Meth seemed to genuinely help his social skills and learning process.

Although Monty didn't fully realize it, his parents were fairly crude, and at times, they were flat-out mean people. Both his father and mother were hardcore, in oh so many ways, and yet Monty seemed to be only marginally cognizant of his parents wicked ways. There's little doubt in my mind that some people are just born mean, and his parents definitely were. Monty was not evil like his parents, and had been born with a good heart. His father had a smile which might have intimidated the devil. His mother once put a gun to his father's head, while Monty watched.

"Please, please, please momma don't shoot, daddy!" Monty had repeatedly begged, that day.

Sometimes when we'd smoke weed, treated with who-knows-what type of hallucinogen, and we'd have the same hallucinations. One of our coolest mutual-hallucinations began, when we were walking late one windy night, while looking at a metal trash can on the side of the dark road, about fifty yards up ahead. The light from a distant street lamp flicked through the moving leaves and branches of an old oak, barely lighting its shiny metal surface. Suddenly, the trashcan was transformed into a huge beautiful live black and orange Bengal tiger, facing us and

baring its large white fangs. It just stood there, glaring at Monty and me, rolling its' shoulders and baring its' teeth. The feeling it engendered, might be described as being an enjoyable kind of intense terror. Enjoyable because we knew it was an hallucination, and terrifying since it was a deadly tiger. Both Monty and I knew that we were hallucinating, yet still felt the palpable fear of being at the mercy of a powerful deadly tiger. To say the least, it was a rush! Years later, I'd have another shared hallucination with a beautiful Mexican woman, in a marble bathroom during sex. The visions included a bunch of colorful large lizards, a huge building, and the undulating lights of Mexico City, which moved in time with the sex.

Monty never became a meth addict, not even close, but he did end-up graduating from the *University of Southern Alabama*, taught high school sociology, and retired after thirty years, with a large beautiful home, and a medium sized family. His students loved him. He and his wife, also a retired government worker, now draw good retirements, and have a comfortable life. Having reached old age, he attends church with his wife, but I don't hold that against him. Albeit meth destroys almost everyone,

who uses it, I feel meth may have considerably improved Monty's life.

His wife is an intelligent Southern Baptist, and a control freak bar-none, who with increasing age, has latched onto Jesus with both hands, surrounded herself with only like thinking people, and lives her life a lot like a mean cantankerous Catholic nun; still, Monty dearly loves her. She married him for great sex, and he married her, for her intelligence and now-gone youthful goodness... different strokes for different... I suppose they both got what they wanted, but they also got a lot of what they didn't want. As strange as it may sound, without those few meth trips, I doubt Monty would have been the same man she married. In fact, he might be dead now, having worked himself into an early grave, with heavy construction work. Prior to finding Jesus, his wife was a bisexual, and thinks that the Lord 'showed her the way.' The truth is that some lesbians go straight as they age, whereas male homosexuals do not. Nevertheless, I lied and told her that lesbians never change, so that this might reinforce her faith. After telling her the lie, it was obvious it made her feel that the Lord had actually helped her... hallelujah!

Some lies are well worth the telling, whereas some truths should never be mentioned.

The White Whale by Mel I. Wamsley

Because of Monty's few beneficial meth experiences, I've often wondered if meth might not be covertly used to help teach children to love learning, especially special kids. The child could be given an extremely tiny dose, in a hospital setting, and closely monitored for possible physical and psychological complications. If there were any untoward effects, the child could be appropriately treated with a small dose of valium. The child should never know, that they'd received a drug. The meth could simply be administered in some fruit juice.

If the child showed no adverse effects, they could undergo special teaching sessions, augmented with small, yet effective, doses of meth. Not only could they be taught the usual three Rs, but vocational and social skills, and in the process, they may come to feel the love of learning. These sessions, using very small doses, could be spaced out, several days apart to avoid addiction, and always with medical help

available. Inherently, I feel that some children could tremendously benefit from such a drug-enhanced-learning scenario; after all, we currently put kids on adderall for ADHD, which is just as addictive as meth. Of course now days, to satisfy the ever greedy Big Pharma, the drug would be adderall, instead of meth. Either one would probably work fine. But once again, I think that it would be important that where possible, the young child not realize that a drug was involved.

With some starting and stopping, I finished a doctorate and a post-doctorate in neuroscience, came up with a few minor scientific ideas, and in the process grew to hate red tape. Later in life, I never acquired the conventional family, but I do have the wonderful girl child and I love her dearly. As mentioned, she's not my biological child, but I couldn't love her more. I'm old enough to be her grandfather, and so leaving the young girl to the ravages of the cruel world is one of the worries about dying. There is a real possibility she loves me, since she gets mad at me when her life gets complicated. One of her problems is that she still believes in true romantic love, and Lord knows that nowadays there doesn't seem to be any young man out there, who

cares about romance. More people seem to live their life in Facebook, and texting on their cellphones, rather than phone conversation, much less actual face-to-face encounters. Facebook has replaced the art of human interaction, and where it may be great for those with speech impediments and social anxiety disorder, but it's become the norm for so many.

A few years after completing my post-doctorate, and working as a research scientist for the US Air Force, a certain boisterous flight surgeon and I were tasked with helping to determine, which stimulant drug might be best to enhance the performance of aviators and other flight crew, during prolonged combat or reconnaissance operations (sustained operations, or SUSOPS). A stimulant drug might be used, where the pilot is required to fly repetitiously for extended periods, mission after mission, possibly for days, and with very little, if any, sleep. What if a pilot hadn't slept in two or three days and suddenly was ordered to carry-out a critical mission, i.e., knockout an enemy stronghold, deliver a nuke, fly extended surveillance, perform air to air combat to defend a battle group, etc? Which stimulant drug might best serve the pilot and/or aircrew during a protracted mission?

In past wars, a highly fatigued pilot has been a fairly common phenomenon, and even though, pilots are generally highly gifted people, they can represent a serious liability when fatigued, especially considering the cost of some aircraft, as well as some of the weapons, which they may carry. Not to mention that, the Marine and Navy pilots land and take-off from extremely expensive nuclear powered carriers. One Nimitz-class aircraft carrier costs about \$8.5 billion, and that doesn't include, the crew, the planes, the fuel, the supplies, as well as the massive supply of costly weapons: nuclear bombs, conventional bombs, missiles (nuclear and conventional), torpedoes (nuclear and conventional), as well as small arms, CWIS, and ammo. Few manmade items are as costly, or as complex, as is a fully equipped nuclear carrier.

There also is the minor fact that a whole bunch of pricey ships surround that giant vessel. The carrier strike group consisted of about 7500 to 8000 folks, and is made-up of a minimum of one cruiser (around \$3.2 billion), two or three destroyers (about \$1 billion each), a few frigates (about \$680 million each), about seventy planes (about \$60 to \$300 million each), and a sub or two, and even the older

Los Angeles-class fast-attack sub runs around \$2.4 billion. Most likely one strike group runs about 23 to 33 billion dollars, and cost about \$6.5 million per day to operate in peace time! That daily cost skyrockets, during combat operations. Consequently, it is important that the combat pilots be in optimal condition. Right now, the US operates ten of these strike groups! But since you the taxpayer, pay for that, I'm sure you knew already these statistics. During a non-combat peaceful year, the ten carrier groups run the taxpayers around \$23,000,000,000,000.00, that's \$23T, and in peace time only costs roughly \$65,000,000.00, \$65 M per day to operate. With combat. So, if things get bad, and the balloon goes up, operational costs can get expensive. Moreover, if a fatigued pilot, crashes into the carrier, or fails to properly defend the battle group, it can be a fiscal disaster, and so selecting the proper stimulant for a fatigued pilot is critical.

Unbeknownst to my fellow government scientists, I had consumed nearly every major type of amphetamine in existence, but only a few of each type. At the time that I meant the aforementioned flight surgeon, and was asked to help with the selection of a stimulant drug for combat operations, I

hadn't taken an amphetamine in over fifteen years, not even to get through graduate school; although, I had used considerable amounts of coffee.

Nevertheless, I certainly remembered what each type of stimulant was like, and there are subtle but important differences between them. Each drug in the amphetamine class, elicits an unforgettable experience. For me, meth generated the greatest amount of clarity and analytical ability, dexedrine and benzedrine also increased these cognitive variables but not as much as did meth, with benzedrine seeming to be more gentle on the body, less toxic. They all vanquished fatigue. These are plainly unclear subjective comments, but still that's how I perceived them. That said, in a survival situation, meth would clearly be the best choice.

For me, meth was like a truly delightful experience. It is something which no amount of discipline, hard work, or even adrenaline, could provide. The drug markedly heightened my cognitive abilities, but it did so in accordance with my own inclinations. In other words, if you're a truly evil bastard, the drug will probably make you more evil. With me, I just wanted to ponder unknowns, and to think about various scientific issues. However,

methamphetamine also caused me to involuntarily consider all things in terms of math, a spontaneous mathematical dialectic would appear, as minor hallucinated formulas, mostly using basic calculus and analytical geometry.

Each type of amphetamine has its differences, and of course, they may vary from person to person, and I'd had numerous friends, who had also given me their individual opinions, concerning their reactions to that stimulant class of drugs. So, when our government lab was given the above-mentioned research tasking, I didn't have to think twice about which stimulant was best for use in the aviation community. In my opinion, it was hands-down methamphetamine.

There are a few disturbing side effects, i.e., the drug's addiction potential, schizophrenia (amphetamine psychosis) in certain users, temporary hypertension, which could lead to stroke or heart attack, and then there was the potential for public condemnation against the military for using a drug with such a bad reputation for illegal use. Due to the small possibility of schizophrenia in certain types of people, it is important to first test each pilot on the drug, while they've been sleep deprived, and in a

stable, well controlled clinical setting, so they could be properly evaluated, both physically and psychiatrically, and so they can be medically tended to if they have an adverse reaction to the drug.

Clearly, it was important to make sure that the pilot was able to safely function on the drug, when fatigued. If the pilot proves to be side effect free, which the vast majority of pilots are, he becomes a far more effective weapon, functioning for extended periods with greater efficiency.

My aforementioned buddy, and Air Force physician, RC Blackburn, and I would viciously argue on a near daily basis, about almost everything, but still, I sincerely loved the big guy. Oft times, when we'd be involved in an apparently hate filled argument, we'd later go to lunch together, as if nothing had happened. We liked a good argument. RC also liked a good fist fight, but lucky for me, he realized that he was way above my weight class. He also enjoyed pissing people off. Again, not because he was hateful, but RC just thrived on intensity and conflict. This made sense, in that politically, he was ultra right wing republican.

He should have either trained to be a boxer or an inventor, but instead, he became a physician. Some

people mistook his aggression aspect as a mean streak; while that was partially true, still he had a big heart. Academic types thought, that since he was so aggressive, he wasn't intelligent, yet he was a *Mensa* member. Most people never waited around long enough to get past the loud part, especially the 'professionals' of the lab. Most scientists are generally too thin skinned, too sensitive, too concerned with professionalism, to tolerate aggression. RC and his brother were both physicians, yet had gotten in a number of fist fights; yet, they loved each other. According to RC, whenever he and his brother would fight, they enjoyed it. Most likely, many MMA fighters are like that.

What RC hated was that the Air Force medical community was controlled by people, who knew practically nothing about medicine, and he wasn't wrong, largely because the medical administrators were just people with degrees in administration. Highly educated and competent doctors were being controlled, by people with near worthless degrees in hospital administration. That degree is an academic joke. The difference between an administrator with a doctorate in hospital administration, and the educational wherewithal of an MD, is like the

disparity between a Cessna 152, and an F-35. The problem is that the administrators are incapable of realizing this.

RC used to say, that the situation of administrators controlling physicians was a lot like monkeys controlling the organ grinders, and on that particular point, RC and I had no disagreement. Administrators are too often some of the most counterproductive people on the planet. They typically have a paucity of empathy, being: superficial, manipulative, and extremely uncreative; yet, those serious shortcomings don't usually prevent them from meddling in things they don't understand, and believing that they're actually doing good, when in fact, all they're usually doing is screwing things-up. RC was fairly old fashioned, yet innovative and truly brilliant. His tested IQ was exactly 140. It's rare that you can find an old dog who's willing, not only to learn new tricks, but to invent new ones.

At times, RC was a lot to put-up with, and every-now-and-then I'd that I'd never talk to him, again. But, all you had to do was to look past all the bluster to see that there was nothing remotely phony or dishonest about the man. He sure as hell wasn't boring or slow witted. At times, there was a little of

the comedian in him. He'd cross his eyes, spin his full bird colonel's hat ninety degrees out of phase, and stick his tongue out one side of his mouth. Then, he'd tell a joke. He was from Oklahoma and proudly considered himself a redneck. RC died young of a massive heart attack; he'd never trimmed the fat off his meat, and his favorite snack was pork rinds.

“Joey, just the other day the governor of Oklahoma's mansion burned to the ground, and most of the trailer park burned-up with it.” RC dryly stated.

When we'd go to the local barbershop, we'd scan the barbershop's complementary girlie magazines, laid-out on the coffee-table. While he was perusing a *Playboy* center-fold, I can recall one of his comments.

“You know Joey, being a physician, and I realize they're just skin-sacs filled with glandular tissue and fat, but aren't those magnificent?” Stating this, he'd turn the magazine, so I could gaze upon one of the most alluring set of well formed mammaries to ever defy gravity.

“It's all a matter of primitive wiring, blue-printed by good old DNA, RC.” I answered.

Aside from those types of minor indiscretions, in

every other way, he loved and was, to the best of my knowledge, faithful to his beautiful wife, Janice. God, I really miss him, but as mentioned he ate a terrible diet. His daughter Clarice is a jewel of a girl. My guess is that she's the offspring, which inherited her Dad's fine brain, but fortunately without his grumpy demeanor. Though I didn't get to know her that well, she seems like a brilliant sweet gentle spirit.

The morning that the Air Force sent down (down the chain of command) the request to determine the best stimulant for use in flight operations, RC and I went to lunch together. He really enjoyed taking long lunches. During the lunch, I asked RC what he thought the best stimulant drug would be for sustained flight operations; all the while, I was positive it was methamphetamine, but I was afraid to voice my opinion, since RC, was such a conservative right winger, but then so is the famous drug addict radio talk show guy, Rusty Limbough.

“Hell, I know what stimulant drug is best! What do you think it should be, Joey... got any ideas?” RC asked me. *How can RC be so certain?*

“I'm pretty sure I know which one is the best, RC.” I answered, without volunteering the name of the drug, for fear of exposing my previous illegal

experimentation with meth.

We both looked at each other in the eye, and simultaneously realized that we had the same idea, ergo in unison we said, ‘methamphetamine,’ with absolute certainty in our voices. Then, we instantly wondered why the other had come-up, with the drug choice. From the world’s gigantic pharmacopeia, we’d named the very same drug, and we were both surprised that the other was so confident about his selection. Since RC was such an ultra-right-wing conservative Republican, I was floored that he seemed to be familiar with the drug. Wrongly, I’d assumed that RC wouldn’t know anything about a drug like meth. He was also shocked at my response, since I had completely hidden my drug-related past from everyone at the lab, including RC. Quickly, I asked the physician why he’d chosen meth. At first he stalled, then he hemmed and hauled, lastly carefully he looked around the restaurant, and just blurted it out, but with a marked reduction in volume.

“Well, gee Joey... how the hell do you think I got through med school? Those classes are hard as shit, man.” He admitted.

“Are you shitting me RC? Are you saying that

you used meth in med school to study for tests?" I responded.

"Just to cram for the really big tests. Some of those exams were real mind benders. Hell, you know; after all, some of your PhD classes were taken in medical school." He defensively stated.

"And, you never got addicted?" I asked.

"Hell no, Joey! Like I said, I only used it just for certain big important tests. I only used it a couple of times each year, till I graduated." He insisted.

"But what about you, Joey? How come you were so quick to name methamphetamine as your drug of choice? Just how is it, you know so much about it?" He countered superciliously, giving me his humorous mind-probing blue eyeball, with an elevated blondish-grey eyebrow.

Coming ninety percent clean, I told him about the few times I had frivolously taken the drug, never mentioning that I'd actually manufactured a little, and sold a bit. For that matter, RC may have also made and sold some; for indeed, there was a lot more to RC, than he let on. Neither RC, nor I had become addicted, and neither judged the other. It's so nice not to be judged, especially by a hardline

conservative.

One of my biggest concerns about this book is how I'll be judged by my friends and acquaintances, when and if, they read it, so I'll be doing my best to make sure, that no one knows I wrote it! Many of my friends are so conventional, and what is soon to follow, in this overly wordy tome, is so illegal, that they may never speak with me, again. Oh, well! We're all gone in a matter of years, so why not let a little of my sorted past hang-out? It'll give a few folks something to gossip about, and Lord knows they love gossip. Of course, everything in these ten books is pure fiction, not a single phrase rings true.

Although RC and I were good friends and worked together in a semi-clandestine government lab, it was obvious to both of us, that we had nonetheless concealed large portions of our individual history, but we didn't care, and never asked the other for much in the way of personal history, and for that reason, for a few seconds, we smiled and nodded our heads. I've often wondered what other astonishing secrets RC may have carried to his early grave. Of course, even though we both knew methamphetamine was the best selection for combat pilots, we still went through the process of reading

hundreds of research articles on the many stimulant drugs, and jumping through the administrative hoops, and governmental red tape.

But when all the superfluous clinical research, and administrative dust had settled, meth was indeed considered the best pharmaceutical for the operational flight community. For one thing, it had less pressor effect, meaning that it didn't rise blood pressure as much as did the other stimulants. During combat, a reduced pressor effect could be important, especially for the older more experienced pilots, who might be pulling lots of Gs (gravitational forces created by the movements of the plane.), and more prone to a stroke. Lots of folks think that being a high performance pilot is a young man's game. But the truth is quite to the contrary. Recently, in the world air races, the average age of the three men, who ended-up standing on the winners' podium was 52, and the sport's most successful race pilot is 55. During the races, the pilots can pull from 9 to 12 Gs, yet the old farts somehow prevail, since as hard as it may be to believe, every now and then, experience actually counts.

<http://www.telegraph.co.uk/men/>

active/11016211/What-it-takes-to-be-a-Red-Bull-Air-Race-pilot.html

As mentioned, RC and I later found-out that, during WWII the Nazi's *Luftwaffe*, whose ace pilots boasted extremely high kill rates (most likely the highest in the history of aviation), flew many of their missions, while feeling good on meth. More than the top one hundred aces of WWII were all Nazis pilots!

https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/List_of_World_War_II_flying_aces

The company *Temmier* or *Temmler Werke* trademarked the drug, under the name *Pervitin*, and claimed that it was one of their chemist that had discovered methamphetamine, in 1933. The Temmler Werke was established in Detmold in 1917 by Hermann Temmler, and in 1919 it merged with *Vereinigte Chemische Fabriken*. In 1925, it moved to Berlin. The company was known for making drugs for the treatment of respiratory ailments. Methamphetamine was manufactured and dispensed over the counter to treat narcolepsy and to help

people to work longer.

As mentioned, the drug used by the Nazis came in a cylindrical roll, looking similar to a roll of lifesavers, with each tablet being a 3 milligram dose of crystal meth. The pilot just chewed the chalky tablet, and swallowed. The company had added a little grape sugar to the chewable, to make it more palatable. In 2012, the *Temmler Group* was bought by the *Aenova Group*, and with its seven production sites, it is currently one of the biggest European pharmaceutical contract manufacturers. Who would have guessed that Temmler is still in business.

<http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Methamphetamine#mediaviewer/File:Pervitindose.jpg>

As stated, the *Temmler* company asserted that they had created the drug and primarily manufactured it for respiratory ailments. A few years later, I'd use it for that same reason, and it worked like a miracle. That experience is also described later in these books. Contrary what the Germans claimed, there's considerable evidence to support the possibility that the Japanese may actually deserve credit for the discovery of methamphetamine. Meth was probably first

synthesized from ephedrine in 1893 by Japanese chemist, Nagai Nagayoshi. Crystallized meth was also derived, by a pharmacologist, Akira Ogata, by reduction of ephedrine using red phosphorous and iodine, in 1919, the year my Dad was born. There is some questionable information that the meth, which was extensively used by the Japanese in WWII: soldiers, pilots, factory workers, etc., and was legally sold, up until around 1951.

<https://www.tofugu.com/japan/meth-in-japan/>

Much later, the potent drug made its debut on the Schedule II list of the *United Nations Convention of Psychotropic Substances* treaty. These days, biker gangs and sundry illegal groups manufacture most of the drug, but largely in highly impure forms. The homemade crystals are usually anything but flawlessly white, as they are in their unadulterated form. Normally the crystals look foggy white, clear gray, and/or a murky brown. Rumor has it that with the airing of the spectacular television series, *Breaking Bad*, the purity of illegal methamphetamine improved. As a joke, there were a few batches, where blue food coloring was added, and it was called

‘Smurf Dope,’ to better promote their product, as being pure.

Operationally, in Nazi Germany the drug was called, ‘pilot’s chocolate’ or ‘pilot’s salt.’ The Nazi Ace, Erich Hartmann, managed 352 kills! Not a single American Ace has ever come close to that number. Richard Bong, America’s top WWII Ace, flew a P-38 and only racked-up 40 kills. Richard probably never took meth, whereas Erich very likely did.

[https://
www.theoccidentalobserver.net/2018/05/08/
warrior-hero-of-the-west-erich-hartmann-the-blond-
knight-of-germany/](https://www.theoccidentalobserver.net/2018/05/08/warrior-hero-of-the-west-erich-hartmann-the-blond-knight-of-germany/)

While I must admit that Hartmann had more years of combat to rake-up that higher number of kills, because of the Spanish Civil War, but by the same token, that extra time also means that Hartmann had more chances to be shot down. As previously mentioned, there was some evidence that the German tank crews, or *Panzer* crews, also used meth. Quite a few, German ground troops received the drug in the early part of 1940. However, after the

war, there does not appear to be that many reported problems with addiction, though it would stand to reason there had to be some. There was one famous soldier, who struggled with meth addiction. He assumed that he was simply exhausted by the war, and was becoming, “cold and apathetic, completely without interests.” In the letters he sent home via the army postal service, he asked his family to send Pervitin. On May 20, 1940, he wrote: “Perhaps you could obtain some more Pervitin for my supplies?” He felt that just one pill was as effective for staying alert, as was liters of coffee. Better yet, he claimed that when he took the drug, all his worries disappeared. The 22-year-old, who wrote home requesting for more Pervitin, was Heinrich Böll, who would become one of Germany's leading writers, winner of the Nobel Prize for literature in 1972. The Pervitin he asked for, as mentioned, was pure crystal meth.

Together, RC and I wrote the early drafts of the guidelines for the use of methamphetamine in Air Force flight operations. RC patiently taught me the importance of editing, accuracy, and intellectual honesty in scientific writing. Where I dearly love science and the process of scientific theorizing and

investigation, I absolutely abhor putting ideas to paper, especially in a publishable fashion. I was only interested in the ideas, writing was nothing but frustration. For me, it's a bit like asking a race horse to pull a plow. Editing is so fucking tedious, that I've often gotten knots in my stomach. Only a few times has it been a pleasure to write. You can probably sense this, since parts of these books are rather clumsy and awkward, where other portions may seem a little more succinct, and possibly even passable. Sadly, writing all this fraudulence has made me realize and regret how much of my life I've wasted.

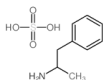
Word through the grapevine is that the drug has now been used in US military operations multiple times, with no complications, and without subsequent addiction issues. After Desert Storm, someone conducted an informal survey of the deployed fighter pilots. There were 464 aircrew in the survey. Of those, 57% used stimulants (17% routinely, 58% every so often, and 25% only once). Sixty-one percent of the guys reported the drug was 'essential' to the success of the mission!

[http://www.med.navy.mil/directives/
Pub/6410.pdf](http://www.med.navy.mil/directives/Pub/6410.pdf)

In my heart, I felt that if I were a combat pilot, and the preverbal shit got too deep, I'd definitely want the drug to be available to me. So perchance, RC and I made a bit of a difference, at least on that call. I'd like to think that I did something worthwhile with my life, but what a strange little contribution... selecting a stimulant for operational pilots. Recently, I've heard that publicly the Air Force claims to be using benzedrine, another amphetamine, rather than meth. That may be true; nevertheless, that could simply be political subterfuge, in an attempt to dodge methamphetamine's unpopular reputation, as created by the *DEA*, and the aforementioned TV series, *Breaking Bad*. God, I loved the series. What a superb group of actors.

The two stimulant drugs (benzedrine and methamphetamine) are indeed quite similar in molecular structure, as well as in their effects on the body, but while meth may be a superior choice, benzedrine has the benefit that it doesn't possess the social stigma.

Benzedrine Sulfate
Methamphetamine^{[OBJ][OBJ]}



Lord knows the military would like to avoid any awkward social stigma. However, in my subjective opinion, meth is by far the better choice for pilots. Some of the Nazi's, previously mentioned Pervitin (meth), also had some benzedrine mixed in with it. That must have been one hell of a treat. I've taken both, and I'd say that meth provides a significantly better cognitive, as well as physical enhancement. In November of 1942 the British Royal Air Force adopted the use of Benzedrine.

[https://journals.sagepub.com/
doi/10.1177/0022009416652717](https://journals.sagepub.com/doi/10.1177/0022009416652717)

For me, the noesis and motor enhancements of methamphetamine significantly out-weighted those of benzedrine; albeit, they were quite similar. Benzedrine was not quite as intense, and a much

more relaxed high. But in the political world, social appearances can trump a pilot's safety, so indeed the pilots may be now getting benzedrine, rather than meth. As stated all the top 100 aces of WWII, were Nazi pilots, and they all likely used meth! Not one single Brit, Japanese, American, or Russian made it into the top one hundred! Perhaps, the proof is in the combat pudding. Once at an Alabama State Fair, my daughter had decided to ride the time honored stomach turning *Tilt-A-Whirl*. Regardless of the thrill, I hate nausea, so while she was riding, I waited by the exit gate, for her ride to finish-up. While standing there, by pure happenstance, I struck-up a conversation with a congenial gentleman, claiming to be a recently retired Air Force pilot, who shall remain anonymous.

The pilot told me that the Air Force had originally used dexedrine capsules, yet another type of amphetamine, when they'd sent the F-111 fighter-bombers into Libya, on the strike against the notorious Libyan dictator, Muammar Gaddafi, in 1986. At that time, Ronald Reagan was president. The pilot informed me that while the flight crews had indeed consumed the dexedrine, they had done so in a fairly ridiculous, if not dangerous, manner.

As you might expect, the man at the fair claimed that none of the flight crews, on that mission, had any previous experience taking amphetamines, nor had they been given any instructions as to how to take the black and red capsules. The Air Force doctors knew that the flight crews would need to use a stimulant, in lieu of the fact that the flight would be long and fatiguing. The French government refused to allow the war planes to fly over France, which causes the American F-111s, based in England, to have to fly down the Atlantic coast and around Spain, before entering air space over the Med. The trip effectively became twice as long. Still I don't know why the US had to fly around Spain, instead of over it, since the US had, and still has, bases there; perhaps, we had to agree not to laugh attacks from Spain.

Perhaps, the flight surgeon involved with that mission had no significant experience, in prescribing the drug. The pilot told me that every crew member had been given five capsules, each capsule was 5 milligrams, for a total of 25 mg(s), and that the flight surgeon had wrongly assumed that the pilots and aircrew would take them, only as they needed them, one every few hours. But the pilots were determined

to resist taking the drug as long as possible.

Instead of properly spacing-out the five capsules, over the entire length of the flight, not having been properly briefed, the flight leader erroneously told everyone on the mission to take all five capsules together at one time, about thirty minutes from their targets. At least that's what the guy at the fair told me. The attack itself only lasted about twelve minutes. God, can you imagine flying in at low altitude in a supersonic F-111 bomber, high on 25 milligrams of pure dexedrine, while rolling-in on a target, and pickling off a shit load of monster bombs, all this, while huge amounts of anti-aircraft fire is ripping-up the sky all around you? That has to be the ultimate fucking high in the history of humankind! Short of being executed in an electric chair, or getting hit by lightning, no three pounds of gray mush has probably ever felt more stimulation!

All that amphetamine, and the corresponding adrenaline, while riding in a supersonic aircraft had to be like 12 gauge shells going-off inside the flight crew's skulls. The only thing missing was the rock and roll, and sex. Being on that air strike may well have been one of the greatest experiences known to mankind. On the human pleasure spectrum, you have

the crucifixion of Jesus Christ on the lower end, and on the opposite end, there's the 1986 Libyan air strike (Operation El Dorado). Then again, all those Nazi pilots on pilot's chocolate in WWII may have had similar experiences, and they were allowed to 'free form' their use of those three milligram meth tablets, and during the war, had an unlimited supply. The rolls of pervitin simply sat in storage boxes in the pilot's ready rooms.

Since the dexedrine laden minds of the F-111 pilots and navigators (one pilot and one navigator per plane) might have been running in ultra-high speed, it's quite likely that their time perception would have been markedly altered. When your mind is high on speed, your thoughts come more rapidly. As a result, five seconds may seem like twenty-seconds, because you've packed four times the usual number of thoughts into that five-second period of time. A person often perceives the passage of time by the number of thoughts which pass through their mind per unit of time. Consequently, on speed the perception of time changes. It slows. One minute may seem like four.

Hence, after locking-on the target, and pickling away a GB-10, two thousand pounder, the pilots may

have wrongly assumed that the plane had already over flown the target, ergo they unfortunately banked-off the target too early, thereby inadvertently taking the plane's tracking camera off line/off the target. The tracking camera needed to continually monitor the target, so that the plane could send telemetric steering signals to the smart bomb, thereby appropriately moving the bomb's steering fins, to guide the smart bomb onto the mark. Quite possibly, because of the F-111 pilot's being on speed, and perhaps too much of it, they banked-away early, and so the telemetry signals failed, and the bombs fell short, and the Air Force missed most of its' targets.

If this story was true, which I do have my own doubts about, that small misuse of a drug carried some major consequences. Many minds work too fast on adrenaline alone. Mine did at the childhood pigeon shoots, In those days, I would counter the adrenaline-induced speed-up, with the two aforementioned shots of bourbon. On adrenaline, I was too fast. Had I substituted dexedrine for the bourbon, I would have been far too fast and probably never have hit a single pigeon. Speed (amphetamines) can make the user too quick, for the

task. You may recall that the bombs fell short of Muammar Gaddafi's palace, landing in the front yard, exploding and blowing-out the front windows. The dirt which was blown through the front windows, ostensibly blinded Gaddafi's son. Another rumor was that the blast killed his daughter, Hanaa, but that was never confirmed. Since the subsequent revolution there has been growing evidence that Hanaa is still alive, although her current status is unknown. Some think she's in Algeria, others say Nigeria. Muammar was assumed to be sleeping behind the palace, in a tent. The supposed intent of the pilot was to nail the palace with the bombs, and thereby blow the building on top of the tent, killing the sleeping Muammar Gaddafi.

The night of the Air Force attack, around two a.m., 18 planes rolled in on the targets, with four electronic countermeasure planes (EF-111) supporting them. About sixty tons of bombs were dropped, yet only 40 to 60 Libyans were killed, about one person for every one ton of munition. Not an overly effective use of explosives, and let's don't forget the fact that there was an F-111 and its crew, lost during that mission. The pilot I was talking with at the fair, while my daughter was on the ride, said

the plane went down in the Med, but he wasn't sure why it had crashed, but mentioned it may have been hit by flack.

At some point in the long return flight from Libya back to Heyford, England, the effects of the 25 mg of Dexedrine worn off, hours long before landing. The capsules the crews had taken were not designed for sustained release. As a result, some of the air crew members were so exhausted, that after they landed, they had to be bodily lifted out of the planes. During the return leg of the mission, when the effects of the powerful stimulants had ended, the flight crew's misery started. That is provided that the story I was told about the Air Force's use of dexedrine is true, but since this is a book of pure fiction, there is no need to be concerned about truthfulness.

Imagine that you've been driving your car for fourteen hours and you desperately feel the overwhelming need for sleep. You have to roll down the window, turn-up the radio, and fight to stay awake. Now, multiply that need for sleep by ten, because you're crashing off a major dexedrine and adrenaline high, and instead of a simple car, you're flying a highly complex supersonic fighter-bomber, worth many millions of dollars, and the entire

country is going to be highly interested in your performance. Talk about pressure! Perhaps, that's why supersonic jet pilots are carefully selected, as a highly gifted lot.

That was quite likely the case, when the crew was approaching the landing strip. The flight crews were probably miserable for the last third of the return leg. It was certainly a good thing that those guys were brilliant, highly motivated men. There was no pulling into a convenience store to stretch your legs, have a cup of coffee, and take a leak, before getting back into the plane, and continuing the journey.

It's interesting how major historical events can hinge on the smallest of details, which may or may not be made public. For example, what would it have been like, if Jack Ruby's gun had jammed, and Lee Harvey Oswald had made it to court, and so the world could have heard his side of the story? Most of the people, who I know, don't think Oswald shot Kennedy. Or, what if Osama bin Laden had made it to court, and been allowed to tell his side of the story, to the American public? Have you ever wondered why bin Laden did what he supposedly did; and if he did, what his motives were... his side

of the story? Have you ever wondered if bin Laden brought down the twin towers? Exactly what evidence have you been allowed to see? Yes, there are a couple of tapes, where he supposedly discusses the twin towers, but just how dependable are those tapes? You the taxpayer have paid for the agents, who have supposedly tried to find him, the numerous airstrikes which attempted to blow him up, as well as for the SEALs, who supposedly shot him. But you, the person who paid for that costly stuff, have not been allowed to hear the story. Why not?

As mentioned, that Libyan airstrike, I just described, may not be true, but the guy certainly sounded convincing, almost as if I was talking to one of the actual pilots. If that story was true, it indicated that aircrews on that mission needed some education on how to strategically take those stimulant capsules, and how that drug would influence their perceptions and reactions.

Accordingly, RC and I wrote those concerns into our recommendations, for the use of methamphetamine in Air Force flight operations, as well as the requirement that any pilot, who might be given/prescribed the potent speed for operational use, be given the drug in a semi-operational setting,

i.e., in a flight simulator flying a stimulated attack mission, and the pilot would first have to stay awake for an extended period of time to better simulate operational fatigue. That way, if the time came to use the drug on an actual mission, the pilot would better know what to expect, and hopefully perform more effectively. We also mentioned that a sustained release capsule be considered, Desoxyn. Believe it or not that meth containing drug is still prescribed, about 15,000 prescriptions, annually. I wonder how many of those are for operational purposes?

In our recommendations, the pilot also had to undergo psychiatric analysis, while on the drug, since amphetamines are well known to produce psychosis, which cannot be clinically distinguished from acute paranoid schizophrenia in certain people. We certainly didn't want a psychotic pilot flying a supersonic fighter with tons of bombs onboard. An insane pilot might suddenly decide that the American carrier was filled with space aliens, hell bent on attacking and destroying the earth, and does a kamikaze run on the carrier.

Getting back to the topic of my early drug-dealing days, none of my ten to twelve drug dealers, the number varied, were under twenty-five years of

age, although two looked younger than they were, and could have passed for teenagers. In those days, I was constantly paranoid. Just the idea of wiretaps flooded me with an abundance of fear, so I never held any telephone conversations with my dealers, and all of my visits to them were made without warning them.

As you probably know, for at least the last twenty-five years, all phone conversations have been recorded, world-wide, including: landlines, cellphones, and satellite-phone communications, but even back then I never discussed drug business on the phone unless it was coded (to be explained). Hence, the idea of an actual wiretap has long been ridiculous. Once the federal agent vaguely imagines that the crime involves something, which could be 'remotely' considered as terrorism, he just sits down at a computer keyboard and accesses, the massive main-frame's memory, to extract the long recorded conversation needed for courtroom evidence, or to be played for some house or senate subcommittee, or to be used by some covert government agency. If the agent doesn't find the evidence for prosecution, he or she doesn't bother the judge for the warrant. If he or she does find the evidence, the agent and judge

predate the warrant to match the pertinent recorded evidence.

Once seated at the computer, the agent only needs to type in their access information, the phone number of the person of interest, the date and times for pertinent conversations, to retrieve the voice recording from the data bank. Think about that little fact the next time you fire-up a doobie (a joint), and use your cellphone, or the next time you phone your friend or accountant, and have a worrisome discussion about your problematic taxes. *AT&T*, the *CIA*, and the *IRS* may be more synonymous, than you might like to imagine.

[https://www.theguardian.com/
commentisfree/2013/may/04/telephone-calls-
recorded-fbi-boston](https://www.theguardian.com/commentisfree/2013/may/04/telephone-calls-recorded-fbi-boston)

Remember *Air America* was in reality a *CIA* company. Do you honestly think it was the only one, that the *CIA* would be satisfied with one tiny company? Wouldn't it make sense for the *CIA* to own a communications company? What difference would it make, if the company went public, and was a large

cap stock? Wouldn't that be an even better covert cover? *AT&T* installs phones all over the world, and for government offices in many different countries. Besides the aforementioned mainframe with all the recorded conversations in the universe, the *CIA* employees working for *AT&T* may have installed phones systems in more of the world's presidential palaces and mega businesses than you might imagine. One of the phone jobs was accomplished in the Presidential palace of Hugo Chavez in Caracas, Venezuela.

So many foreign powers enjoy purchasing American technology, but don't know what they're also getting in the process. Similarly, the feds and the military industrial complex (MIC) are becoming, to a large extent, one-in-the-same. A lot of people in the intelligence agencies go to work for businesses in the military industrial complex (MIC), and visa versa. In a way, they're synonymous, one hand supplies the war, and the other supplies the weapons, to blow the shit out of a whole bunch of folks, while the government politicians and the conventional news media supply the propaganda to feed the undereducated American populace. "We're not in the Boy Scouts..." Director Richard Helms repeatedly

said, when he ran the *CIA*. Wonder what he could have been talking about?

He was no doubt correct, of course. Boy Scouts do not ordinarily do things like bribe foreign politicians, invade other countries with secret armies, spread propaganda lies, conduct medical experiments, build stock piles of poison, hand-over machine guns to foreign citizens, who plan to turn them on their leaders, run secret prisons, or plot and assassinate certain leaders, who have pissed-off Washington, or have stood in the way of the profits of the military industries, nor do Boy Scouts purposely commit crimes to generate more terrorists, to increase the MIC's profits.

The *CIA* may have done these things, and more, but on whose orders? This is a question a Pulitzer prizewinning writer addresses in an adaptation from his forthcoming book about R. Helms and the Agency, *The Man Who Kept the Secrets*, by Thomas Powers. *Homeland Security* employs hundreds of thousands of folks, but how many can you recall meeting? Most likely you have. Roughly 100,000 folks work for *NSA*. In fact, you may know, or have known, far more than you realize. *CIA* folks work in many businesses and industries. *Fort G.G. Meade* and

NSA/CSS Hawaii are like the epicenters of universal consciousness. Site M, next to Fort Meade, where there are currently two golf courses, may soon be considered the sixth branch of the military, dedicated to cybersecurity/warfare and anti-terrorism, or is it just another means for starting profitable wars for the MIC, or maybe it's just subterfuge? They've got to have some reason to keep demanding and taking your taxpayer money.

Then, there's the spoils of war, which various covert US agencies and certain huge corporations profit from. Oh sure, some small fraction of the spoils which go toward rebuilding the enemy country, but it's US corporations which do the rebuilding, companies which are owned by the same US covert agencies. Recently, those profitable spoils, include things like: oil, national treasuries (various viable paper currencies, stacked on pallets), minerals (gold, silver, uranium, jewels, etc.), thousands of tons of opium, ten gold mines, rare earth mines, etc., we have gleaned from the countries, we've invaded. While we may feel that they (*NSA, CIA, FBI, etc.*) are too invasive and criminalistic, there's a real possibility that the United States would have ceased to exist, without those greedy nosey guys, or the

United States would have ever reached the status it has, but just what is that status? The world's biggest bully, the biggest killer, with the world's most deadly military? The biggest jailer of its' own citizens? America has the world's meanest cops? 37th in the quality of medical care? America, the country which purposely doesn't make medicines which don't cure, so big Pharma gets rich? The most under educated of the modern countries? The world's bestcrippler of its citizens with welfare? Still, they may have gotten too big and too dangerous for their britches. These agencies work in conjunction of Britain's *GCHQ* (The Government Communications Headquarters), an intelligence and security group responsible for providing signals intelligence and information assurance. The building itself is called, 'The Doughnut,' and it's located in the suburbs of Cheltenham, operating under, and on behalf of, MI5, MI6, and DI (Defense Intelligence).

https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Government_Communications_Headquarters

But now, many feel those nosey gentlemen may be primarily interested in serving the needs of the

military industrial complex (MIC), rather than serving the wellbeing of the average American or English citizen. It won't be long and there'll be a triad, which includes the Australian Secret Intelligence Service, at the old R. G. Casey House. Perhaps, these countries no longer feel that the citizens are worthy, and that since their MICs pays so well, they're willing to sell their souls. While some of the rational about war and terrorist is true, the question is what part is true, and what is pure propaganda to generate profits for the MIC? Homeland Security's electron-based fingers are probing through all of our phones and computers; listening to and recording our thoughts, and through their minions they carefully manipulate our media, telling us what's supposedly happening, and therefore what to think and believe as truth. And while you might think their main focus is on terrorists, make no mistake, their true interest is on making money, for themselves, and for the mega corporations of the ever hungry MIC. The intel agencies are now merely the servants, the helpers, of the MIC.

With all the intelligence communication data gleaned from every major business in the world, NSA

is probably the most savvy economic market investor on the planet, and of course any investment profits they garner, are non-taxable! In a way, the *CIA's* investment savvy is good for you, the taxpayer, since their annual operating expenses are probably more than could be covered by our entire national budget. They have to get the excess money from somewhere. Why bother with a small percentage of the meager national budget, when you've got electronic fingers into every market, large company, financial institution, and commodity in the world? All you need is the investment capital. There are only twenty major stock exchanges, and with all the covert communication the CIA surveils, it's not difficult to play them, like it's child's play. No doubt the agency also involves itself in the commodities markets, as well.

[https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/
List_of_stock_exchanges](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/List_of_stock_exchanges)

But then, with their unfathomable espionage capabilities, and their enormous computer and telecommunication abilities, why not just gin-up your own bank, and all the electronic currency you desire?

What would be stopping the NSA? With electronic signals, now representing actual wealth, why bother with good old fashion counterfeiting, or insider trading? But, I suppose that they used to be counterfeiting, as well, and not just US currency, but other foreign currencies, as well as various other financial documents, like the ever popular and largest form of financial currency... the bearer bonds. All that would be fine, as long as it's for the betterment of the United States, but not when it results in the deaths of innocent people, like finding and creating a goodly supply of terrorist fanatics, and sacrificing a few thousand of our military in the process. Drone strikes frequently kill more innocents than terrorists. This technique often transforms the friends and relatives of those dead innocents into full-fledged enemies of the state, thereby creating more targets, giving the greedy MIC more reasons to produce more weapons, etc. Is the ultimate success when the every country in the entire world appears to be run as a democracy, but is actually run by America's corporations? What would happen then? What would the world be like?

In the councils of government, we must guard against the acquisition of unwarranted influence,

whether sought or unsought, by the military-industrial complex. The potential for the disastrous rise of misplaced power exists, and will persist.

President Dwight D. Eisenhower

Like it or not, supercomputers and super-spying are here to stay; at least, until Americans get smart enough to demand that it stop. IBM built Sequoia, a 20 petaFLOPS/s system, using futuristic Blue Gene technology, as well as Dawn, a 500 teraFLOP/s Blue Gene/P system. By itself, just Sequoia is so powerful, that if everyone on earth was using a hand calculator, and worked 24 hours a day, everyday of the year, for 320 years, it would only equal what Sequoia could do in one hour. Sequoia in the Cherokee language means, 'sparrow.' Oddly enough, the word, "Sequoia," is one of the few words in the English language, which contains all the vowels. The meaning of these words seem to imply something. Here's the list. Read them and ask yourself what comes to mind.

EVACUATION

MULTIBILLIONAIRE

REMUNERATION

REGULATION

MISBEHAVIOUR
AUTHORITIES
AUTHORIZE
AUTHENTICATION
PRECAUTION
MIRACULOUSNESS
MISDEMEANOUR
PREAMBULATION
AURIFEROUS
MENSURATION
TAMBOURINE
UNOSTENTATIOUS
UNOBJECTIONABLE
MULTIMILLIONAIRE
CONSEQUENTIAL
PRECARIOUS

Perchance that all vowel thing somehow figures into why the word was selected in the naming of the massive computer. Or perchance, the word Sequoia was chosen since it was the name of the Cherokee silversmith, who in 1821 came-up with the means of writing the Cherokee language, a Cherokee syllabary. In essence, his name was ‘Sparrow.’ He was a kind of code breaker, or perhaps ‘code builder’ might be

more appropriate. Makes sense to me, having a clever 'handle' for a computer, which monitors the earth's communications. Maybe, naming the computer Sequoia (sparrow) has to do with the fact that sparrows are practically everywhere on earth, yet those benign little birds tend to go largely unnoticed. Although the sparrow is not a water fowl, it is a good swimmer, as in, underwater. Moreover, sparrows are strongly associated with human habitations, and live in urban or rural settings, and they love sitting on communication lines.

https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/IBM_Sequoia

Most other such words, which contain all the vowels, cheat and use the prefix 'un-' to be able to claim the use of all the vowels. Maybe the name, Sequoia, was selected because it can listen to and record every word spoken or type of electronic communications (all frequencies of transmission, cell phones, landlines, text messages, emails, internet searches, electronic banking transactions, electronic stock transactions, option purchases, bond and CD purchases, metals and other commodity deals, intra and extra corporate communications, international

government and military communications; in effect, all communications...) all the vowels, so to speak. Maybe back, when the Bill Donovan was in charge of the OSS (the precursor to the modern day *CIA*), there was a real need for all that far-reaching spying. But now, guys like Hitler, Tojo, Stalin, Mao, and Khrushchev are long gone. The problem is that after WWII, the Korean conflict, the Vietnam war, and the cold war with Russia, a giant intelligence group, and an even bigger military industrial complex still remained, and they are oh so hungry, so very very hungry, and accustomed to killing, lots of killing, and for all that killing being given lots and lots of money. Perchance, they all feel they are somewhat entitled for what they did in years past. What do you say? America's military might is estimated to be roughly three times the combined strength of the rest of all the countries on earth, so how much stronger do we need to be? How much more damage do these military industries need to do to our economy? Nevertheless, it was those hardworking factory workers, many of whom were women, who turned-out all the weapons to fight WWII.

WWII lasted only four years, where Korea lasted only three years. Then came Vietnam and it lasted

twenty years! That was a real money-maker for the MIC. The Afghanistan War has been dragging-on since 2001, and the corresponding wars and skirmishes in the middle east might just go on and on forever... a never ending profit for the MIC. These currency wars are a joke. America has to see each and every enemy combatant at any given moment. And there are people with stone-age weapons. We don't hit North Korea and Iran, and these two countries are potential nuclear threats, that treat their citizens in oppressive ways, and probably should have been dealt with, whereas Iraq has plenty of oil, and a massive treasury, and Afghanistan has lucrative poppies, and producing gold mines. Iraq had a powerful army, which technologically was ill-equipped to handle the US military, and we wiped them out with a snap of our fingers. Afghanistan only has a bunch of disorganized homegrown men, running around in cumbersome robes, planting IEDs, and shooting antique AK-47s.

When I was a three year old child, I fantasied about being able to be invisible, so I could go in anyone's house, without being seen, just to see how other people lived and what they talked about, and what they looked like naked. I was only curious

about people, but I was just a powerless young child. Still, I felt that I had the right to invade the homes since I deemed myself to be a 'good guy.' For me, it seemed adults were walking secrets, slow to divulge anything about themselves. Maybe too many people feel powerless, and just need to create that false allusion of power, something which gives them meaning, e.g., killing and stealing.

You might assume that the government needs this excessive invasive surveillance technology because of terrorism, regardless of whether we've purposely generated that terrorism, or we've just allowed it to transpire. After all, the important fact here is that the MIC gets its weapons used, so it can sell more, and that the intelligence community can still feel important, and it gains authority and makes money for itself and the MIC, which it chooses to be America, not the citizens. The MIC and the countless lobbyists, the Intel groups, and their puppet politicians dish out huge amounts of injury and death, to justify the huge defense budget. One would like to imagine, that if the citizens of the United States were going to fund the largest military in the history of the world (as we do), then we'd want to go after the bad guys, countries which treat their

citizenry like crap: Iran, North Korea, and just look at how poor the Saudis treat their women. And lord knows, there is a never ending supply of horrid oppressive governments on the continent of Africa. *JSOP (Joint Special Operations Program)* has hit some of those, but only where there are some serious minerals, i.e., gold, uranium, etc. Between 2013 and 2017, U.S. special operations forces saw combat in more than 13 African countries, so said retired Army Brig. Gen. Don Bolduc, serving at U.S. Africa Command from 2013 to 2015, then he headed Special Operations Command Africa. But were any of the oppressive governments overthrown, or did the US just get rich off of spoils, and stolen business?

All this technology, covertly ginned-up to do surveillance on very nearly the entire world, has been in use for many years, even when there was no significant threat. With our massive surveillance, we also spy on more than threats to the country. We collect data that is used to make money and expand our power base; or rather, the power base of the *NSA/CIA/Homeland Security*. If you can effectively ease-drop on all the major companies listed in the world stock exchanges, you've probably got it made in the shade, when it comes to investing. This

eavesdropping lends new meaning to the phrase insider trading!

When it comes to generating war, Americans tend to fall into three groups. First, there are the vastly ignorant brainwashed followers, who have blind faith in whatever propaganda the more hawkish politicians happen to speak, and their associated media supports. Then there's those people who may often be smart, but have a mean streak, a small psychopathic piece of gray matter, which loves the idea of the American military kicking ass in some foreign land, whether it's justified or not. Lastly, there're a small percentage of people, who honestly try analyze the pros and cons of war, carefully considering both sides, in why the war/conflict started and whether or not it's justified, beyond what the mass media may be belching forth. That tiny group of people might also look at such questions as: what are the spoils of war and what is being done with said spoils, is there justification for the massive associated death and injury on both sides, is the selected enemy truly dangerous, have all other measures been exhausted to avoid war, should the war continue, the percentage of the dead and injured which are innocent people, etc. War needs to be

revealed in all of it's facets, every single drop of blood.

Unfortunately, the first two groups comprise about ninety-nine percent of our citizenry. However, the latter small group is slowly growing, largely due to information blogs, and alternate forms of more progressive media, and then there's all those writers, cranking-out books, and Hollywood making cinemas, showing people the more selfish, psychopathic motivations behind war. That slow development in political awareness might be disturbing to the MIC, the military, the hawkish politicians, and intelligence agencies, who depend on war and conflict, or at least on the marked potential for war.

The massive computers, like Sequoia, though partly or largely used for covert purposes, are unclassified, so imagine what kind of covert computer is at GCHQ in Fort Meade, or out there in Hawaii, or inside 'the doughnut' in merry ole England! Many years ago, religions and their omniscient God, or Gods, or Goddesses, as represented by their self-serving minions, assumed the role of controlling the masses. Those special little pieces of gray matter, which fear things like excommunication, death and burning forever, are

fast declining in number. Thank goodness. I must asked themself the question, 'Is belief based on unsubstantiated fear truly believing?'

Fewer young people are undergoing the early ritualistic indoctrination of the churches, temples, mosques, and synagogues. Therefore, less people are believing the supernatural stuff. If you study religions, without the required years of repetitive brainwashing, or because you've hit some crisis in your life (death in the family, addiction, financial ruin, illness, loneliness, etc.), they all may seem somewhat laughable. On the other hand, they tend to have good stories and rules to live by. As religions begin to wane and go the way of the saber toothed tiger, perhaps these all-knowing computers, as represented by their self-serving covert agencies, will assume the role of controlling the masses. Inevitably, there's always someone, who wants to control other people.

Control freaks are usually those people, who need more self-control.

The Outer Limitless by Leo W. Mallory

We often hear of the *CIA*'s boondoggles, and of its massive world-wide spying, but rarely do we hear about their victories. Without said victories, the United States might have fallen, years ago. More than likely, the *CIA* is also responsible for much of America's profound financial successes. Perhaps, it was the *CIA*, which led that intellectual giant, George W. Bush, into believing that Iraq actually had weapons of mass destruction. After all, the United States (the *CIA*) had given them chemical weapons, when they were fighting Iran (1980-88). While the *CIA* has no doubt been good for the country, it may be a little bit better for the MIC.

And, just look at all the oil we've acquired for *Exxon* and *British Petoxic*! While the US military industrial complex uses-up much of America's budget, they are using our military might to acquire amazing amounts of wealth, but only a tiny percentage of said wealth (the spoils of war) actually gets to the tax-payer, who paid for the war. There is no telling how much good the *CIA* has provided the American public, by its' overseas endeavors, in support of the MIC. As a result, it may have been a bit disingenuous of me to even venture a critique of the intelligence agencies, since there's nothing like

discussing things which one knows little about.

While presidents, senators, and congressmen come and go, many of the *CIA*'s most talented leaders remain on the job, often twenty to forty years, keeping you safe and free, doing the actual running of the government, so we can bitch about them. Still, as of late, many of them do seem to have sold-out to the largest corporations, the highest bidders. And sometimes, I wonder how much the *CIA* was involved in the killing of President Kennedy and Dr. King, since both were against the highly profitable (for the MIC) Vietnam war effort. The true identity of the people, who killed those two men is still shrouded in mystery. In effect, the two men clearly may have jeopardized the MIC's massive profits, and consider the number of anti-war followers John Lennon inspired, with his songs about peace, and look what happened to him. If there's too much peace, there's too little profit for the MIC. In addition, Robert Kennedy spoke-out against the Vietnam war, saying that we are putting too much money into weapons and war, when there are so many Americans going without enough food, shelter, etc. He was assassinated, as well. A small man, by the name of Sirhan, shot Robert Kennedy. Sirhan was examined

for more than 60 hours by Daniel Brown, a Harvard Medical School professor with considerable expertise in forensic psychiatry, as well as hypnosis. In his affidavit, filed with Sirhan's 2011 appeal, Daniel Brown stated that "Mr. Sirhan did not act under his own volition and knowledge at the time of the assassination and is not responsible for actions coerced and/or carried out by others." Brown also claimed that Sirhan was a "Manchurian Candidate," and programmed to carry-out the violent political act. Supposedly, Sirhan killed Robert Kennedy because of his support for Israel.

For a moment, just imagine that we attain world peace. Without war, that behemoth portion of the US economy, siphoned-off by the military industrial complex might be directed toward other foolish things, such as: education, environmental preservation, healthcare/medicine, etc., and the MIC might go belly-up. Kennedy's supposed assassin was silenced by murder. Oswald was fatally shot, up-close and personal, by a *CIA* operative, Jack L. Ruby, before Oswald's innocence could be established, and then, as you know, Ruby soon died of cancer, silencing him forever. King's alleged killer, James Earl Ray, maintained his innocence, even when dying

in prison, so there just might be a real chance that some agency assassinated Dr. King.

[https://video.search.yahoo.com/search/video?
fr=yfp-t&p=james + earl
+ ray#id=1&vid=d91efdd98b1f78a9bfc7c70c32338808&](https://video.search.yahoo.com/search/video?fr=yfp-t&p=james+earl+ray#id=1&vid=d91efdd98b1f78a9bfc7c70c32338808&)

Lennon's murderer was conveniently insane, and having known more than my share of paranoid schizophrenics, I can tell you they're far too easy to manipulate. You only need to make the target a part of their delusions. All one had to do was to make the insane man a killer is to make him believe that Lennon somehow fit into his misconceptions and therefore needed to be killed: to save the world, or to keep someone from being murdered, etc. David Chapman instructed his lawyers to plead him guilty, based on what he had decided was the will of God. Chapman was a born-again Presbyterian. The judge approved the plea, concluding that Chapman was actually sane. However, he sentenced him to a prison term of twenty years to life, with a confounding stipulation that mental health treatment be provided.

Almost everyone remembers Robert Kennedy's

speech the night Martin Luther King was killed. In it he also referred to the assassination of his brother John F. Kennedy. He quoted a poem from Aeschylus.

Even in our sleep, pain which cannot forget
falls drop by drop upon the heart,
until, in our own despair,
against our will,
comes wisdom
through the awful grace of God.

While I would never so manipulate an insane person, it is obviously quite easy to do. Become the schizophrenic's friend. Play into their fears/delusions/paranoia, convincing them that their misconceptions are indeed real, and that you believe in them, and then carefully introduce into said delusions the proposed target, the person or persons you want them to kill. Once the schizophrenic has found a fellow believer, and is convinced that the target is profoundly evil, dangerous, i.e., a demon, or alien, the devil, etc.; this inspires the schizophrenic to act, to save themselves or to perhaps to save the

planet, or America, or to save many people, or just some individual, etc. The schizophrenic is then psychologically prepared to kill the target. Just make sure an effective weapon is available, and that the schizophrenic knows how to effectively use it. Albeit this sounds a bit complicated, nothing could be simpler, if you are willingly to abuse the mentally ill to make them an instrument of murder. If the schizophrenic is captured, you don't have to worry about their testimony; they're insane.

Perchance, to keep the MIC rolling in dough, the United States must continue to kill lots of overseas 'enemies,' keep all those hundreds of drones doing recon, striking and blowing-up supposed terrorists and the nearby innocents, or keep sending in *JSOP* all around the world on covert actions/ assassinations. At the very least, the MIC will want to ramp-up that good old classic cold war, to keep those hundreds of military supporting corporations (roughly 300 major companies and many other minor ones) fully operational; especially the expensive weapons: large ships, aircraft, atomic weapons, outer space communications and weapons platforms, etc.

For some reason, I find it difficult to imagine

President Obama, the man elected because he was going to bring about 'change,' having *JSOP* to carry-out unnecessary death-dealing missions. Nor can I see President Obama ordering so many drone strikes, supposedly killing terrorists, as well as innocents, who unfortunately were standing too close, when the missile detonated. Sometimes, I wonder about his true motivations. Perhaps, the *NSA* threatened to kill Obama or his family members. Maybe that speculation is too far fetched, but maybe not. Just look at Russia, the former head of their *Federal Security Service (FSB)*, the primary intelligence organization of the Russian Federation, and the successor to the *KGB* (Russian equivalent of the *CIA*), now runs their country. Likewise, President George H.W. Bush was director of the *CIA*. Something tells me that the heads of covert intelligence groups should not be allowed to run for political office, especially not the presidency. Why not? They just may have a tendency to give away too much power, which should be under the voter's direct to indirect control, to said agencies.

How well I recall the anti-war protests in Washington DC! In 1960s and 70s, there were plenty of anti-war protests in the nation's capital. One time,

I saw the military bring in troop transports, right down Pennsylvania Avenue, the main street in front of the White House. My friends and I were hoping to get past the military barriers, and into the middle of the protest, not to participate as protesters, but just so we could watch the inevitable conflict between the police and the protesters. In a most untimely fashion, this text is my protest, since the wars still continue, for the same reasons, spoils and rewarding the military industrial complex of corporations. Those old war protests could become quite fierce.

They were basically America youth, saying, such things as, “We need to stop killing foreigners, just so that certain greedy industrialists can grow rich,” and “One, two, three, four, we don’t want your funk’n war!” The police would often be heard saying things such as. “Those unpatriotic funk’n hippies, they need their worthless asses kicked!” The reason for the conflict was owing to ignorance on both sides. The cops wrongly assumed that the war in Vietnam was being fought for the good and moral reason of stopping communism; they fell for that flimsy propaganda, and at least initially the excuse seemed plausible, since Mao had been fairly ruthless. The protesters knew the truth about the MIC getting rich

off the war and that was the actual reason for the war, but they were still extremely disrespectful of, even spitting on, those brave men, who fought in the war; men who thought they were fighting for moral reasons. Both sides were blind in one respect or another.

Only about fifty-four thousand Americans were killed in that purposeless war in Vietnam, but roughly three million Vietnamese perished; fifty six dead Vietnamese for every dead American; it was a high tech military versus a low tech jungle fighters! America was so careful not to bomb critical areas in North Vietnam, less they win the war and the profits stop for the military industries.

As long as America keeps its youth poorly educated, they'll probably continue to believe the media, and the MIC can continue killing foreigners, with the comparatively lesser (acceptable) number of dead and injured Americans, so the gluttonous MIC will remain unbelievably prosperous! To gain access to the area where the protest was happening, my friends and I first made a stop by a *Red Cross* center, just outside the District of Columbia. At the RC, we pretended to be interested in becoming volunteers, but instead, we stole/borrowed a few *Red Cross*

armbands and a large *Red Cross* flag. We draped the red and white eight foot flag over the roof of the car, and using long pieces of twine, tied it in place, and with the *Red Cross* armbands around our sleeves, we drove-up to the military barricades on Pennsylvania Avenue. We then hung our arms out the windows, decorated with the armbands, and screamed “Red Cross... open-up, now!” We stated this, as if it was an order. True to form, the soldiers responded. With that simple stunt, the soldiers nodded, began to shout, and the green Army trucks pulled back, like the parting of the red sea, allowing us passage right down Pennsylvania Avenue, directly in front of the White House, with all the troops, police, and the protesters about to clash, head-to-head. We simply parked the car by the curb, and got out. We’d only wanted inside the barriers, so that we could watch the upcoming violence, between the police and the protesters. But since we weren’t police, army, or protestors, for a few seconds, everyone was watching us, with our armbands, just to see what we were going to do. Presumably, both the police and the protestors thought we were there to render first aid to any and all casualties on both sides, resulting from the inevitable clash. In the days of the war protests, ninety-nine percent of the cops believed

that the war in Vietnam was a genuine effort to stop communism, and had nothing to do with crooked politicians, lobbyists, and the three hundred companies of the military industrial complex. Once you control the media, you pretty well control the average American's thinking... America. Often, it's those pesky smart folks that are more difficult to manipulate, and so they're dealt with in others ways. Nevertheless, those pesky smart guys, usually chose to demean the brave veterans. This was as if to say that, 'you deserve to be scorned for being fooled about the purpose of the war.'

After parking the car, it was clear that the cops and protesters were about to go head-to-head, so we threw our armbands back in the car, and climbed-up into the trees inside the adjacent Lafayette Square. We simply sat amongst the branches, to bare witness to the two groups (cops an protestors) fight it out. First, the cops came down the Pennsylvania Avenue from one direction, and the protesters from the opposite direction. They meant, right in front of where we were sitting in the trees, of the seven acre Lafayette Square, directly in front of the white house. Both groups stopped about twenty feet apart, and for a minute, nothing happened. Both sides plainly

appeared to be filled with hate, but just stared and glared at each other. I'd heard that the aggressive angry cops could be expected to throw the first punch, but in truth, it was the cops, who tried to reason with the protestors. The cops kept it to words. The demonstrators were screaming their slogan, 'One, two, three, four... we don't want your fucking war.'

Unexpectedly, a young long-haired hippie, just behind their front line, suddenly heaved a brick, like Sandy Koufax on his best day. The brick didn't get much altitude but was moving fast considering that it was a heavy brick. It hit an unsuspecting cop, dead in the center of his chest, and put him down on the ground. The cop had never seen the brick before it smashed into his sternum. The battle between the cops and the protesters instantly ensued, while the injured cop laid on the ground, holding his broken chest, and my friends and I sat watching in the trees. There was no helping the injured cop, who was firmly surrounded by all the maniacs in battle mode.

While I must say, I fully agreed with the antiwar protesters' position, they were often the first to start the conflicts with the police. Young people were tired of dying in a foreign war, just so the military

industrial complex could get rich. The government said they needed to stop communism. Ho Chi Minh was indeed a communist, but more than once he had approached the United States for help, both Wilson and Truman had simply ignored his pleas. With US aid, the country would have become a democracy, but we didn't help them, since there was no money to be made off the deal. All Vietnam had was rice, etc., but no gold, no oil, no opium, {The opium was mainly in the Thai province of Chiang Rai in the 'Golden Triangle,' only slightly overlapping the borders of Burma, Laos, and Vietnam.}, but still, Vietnam could be a place to fight a profitable war for the MIC. While we helped to defeat the Japanese in Vietnam, we did nothing, if not actually support, the greedy French colonists, who took-over Vietnam. The victory of the Vietnamese at Dien Bien Phu, against the French, scared the western world, and the domino theory (excuse) was quickly ginned-up. We should have looked at Dien Bien Phu as the end of oppressive colonialism, but instead, some people began to spread the fear of communism, and the need for war, the need for the MIC to get rich. Large numbers of American students weren't very kind to the returning vets, who often didn't realize that they had been used as government pawns, while risking

life and limb, for the MIC. I never could look down on those returning combat vets, since my fine Dad was a combat vet. How can one spit on a brave man, just because he's been fooled about the reason for the war?

Everyone, students and soldiers, has a little piece of angry gray matter, which needs to occasionally fire-off. But regardless of who started it, the conflict on Pennsylvania Avenue was the law (the ultra-right), versus the morally right (the ultra-left). The police adhered to the letter of the law, and the protesters knew full well that America was needlessly killing thousands of GIs, and millions of Vietnamese, for the wealthy CEO psychopaths of the MIC. The communist threat might have been real, but Vietnam was not part of it. Vietnam was just another pawn of Russia, a place where the Russian MIC could sell its wares. Vietnam was just a poor third world country, looking to reunite itself.

Before the Vietnam War began, the North Vietnamese wanted to be our friends/allies. The US parachuted in advisors to speak with Ho Chi Minh, near the end of WWII (1945). At times during their meetings, Ho claimed to be communist and at other times not. Basically he wanted to get the French out

of his country, and unite the north and the south of Vietnam. For support, he'd tell Russia he was communist, and tell the US he was not, but even when he admitted that he'd told the Russians he was communist, he still asked to be friends with the United States. Back then, fighting the Japanese, we were certainly more Ho's ally, than was communist China.

Vietnam didn't have any serious amount of gold and practically no oil, just a little coffee, rubber, cashew and rice; still, the country was a great staging ground for a profitable war. Now, Vietnam export shoes, and constantly advertises in US publications, to attract the American tourists. The ads don't look too inviting. Vietnam veterans regularly go there to revisit their adrenaline soaked past, but are often not allowed in areas where battles occurred. The idea of the communist threat was real for many, and the MIC and its political puppets took full advantage of that phony paranoia. Again, we should have been less fearful, and we would have seen that the Vietnamese were just tired of being held down by the French. They wanted their freedom, just like the various colonies wanted their freedom from the English, in 1776. While this piece of Vietnam's history is no

doubt extremely complicated, the above few sentences are fairly accurate. The war in Vietnam was a huge waste of human life, as well as the taxpayers' money! [Robert McNamara](#) was a great business executive, but that didn't remotely qualify him to be secretary of defense. Kennedy's vision of war was that of WWII, but Vietnam was a weird little gorilla war. The Americans wrongly assumed that the Vietnamese in the cities were allies, and that the villagers were the Vietcong. There's no doubt that America was wrong to go there; at least, the way it did. I think that in those days, the vast majority of Americans refused to believe that America might fight an unjust war. God, they were wrong!

The tombstone motto for the CEOs of the MIC should be 'Unlimited gallons of blood for huge profits.'

The Military Industries by Will M. Morley

As the two groups fought it out, the police started shooting teargas. I was sitting on a branch, leaning up against the tree trunk, when without warning, the wind suddenly blew the tear gas up into

my face, so I dropped to the ground and ran for it. Blinded by the police tear gas, coughing violently, and sprinting wide-open, I blindly ran out of the park, down some sidewalk, and slammed chest-first into an unforgiving parking meter. It felt like my sternum broke. The coastal ribs on either side hurt for two years, thereafter, so I'm fairly sure they broke. In pain, I got up off the concrete, again ran, and was still choking, then spotted a slow passing car, and dove through the open passenger window, to escape the teargas. The motorist initially freaked, then was kind enough to allow me safe harbor, as he drove away. The next morning, I went back to get my car. Amazingly, the *Red Cross* flag was still on the roof, so I took it back to the *Red Cross* center, along with our armbands, telling them that I'd found them in a trash can, near Key bridge.

But, as usual, I've run far afield, and need to get back to my story about my drug dealing in Mobile. Dealing drugs in redneck Mobile kept me in a near constant state of fear. It's likely, I'm one of the most paranoid, hallucinating, non-schizophrenics in the world. None of my drug dealers knew my real name, or my phone number, nor did they know where I lived. They knew me by names such as: Phillip, Jeff,

Fred, Luke, Max, Matt, Mark, and Scott. Those were the names of some of my childhood friends. I chose to refer to myself, using those names, because they were easy to remember. When I'd first meet a prospective dealer, before I'd mention anything about drug dealing, I'd just try to think which of my childhood friends he or she most reminded me of, and then, I'd formally introduce myself, using that former friend's name. For example, one of the dealers was an excellent runner. My childhood friend, Phillip, had been a great runner, so I introduced myself as Phillip. One of my smart female dealers was constantly interrupting, just like my old friend Max used to do, so I introduced myself as Max... so forth, and so on.

Before I'd 'hire' a dealer, I'd do a little homework. Generally, I first try to get to know them casually, learning their: friends, hangouts, drug use, and sexual orientation. Usually, I'd start the interview by just taking them to eat. Later, I'd check on their criminal record, where they lived, where they ate, what clubs they frequented. In those days, the police were more trusting. I could call them on a payphone, and say that I was thinking about hiring my prospective employee to work for me, in my

house cleaning service, or my house painting business, etc. I only had to give the cops their name, age, and race, and they (the cops) would tell me, if they had ever been arrested. If it turned out that they had a felony record or a charge which had been reduced from a felony to a misdemeanor, I wouldn't use them, for fear that they might have been an informant. As a rule, once arrested for a felony in Mobile County, the cops owned them for years thereafter, requiring them to squeal on countless drug dealers and users. Once busted, the arrested person more or less became an informant for life. The crime was forever held over their head, a lasting threat, a sin without forgiveness.

Many of those, who'd been arrested were more than willing to work for the cops to avoid the danger and indignity of prison life. Frequently, the state attorneys office worked with the police to postpone hearings indefinitely. While longterm abuse of those arrested is often beneficial to the police, it often keeps the arrested individual from perceiving themselves as being reformed. Recidivism rates in the United States are the highest in the world... once a criminal, always a criminal, as things are currently done, there's little hope for positive change. No

doubt this has something to do with the fact that America locks-up more people, and a higher percentage of its' citizens, than does any other country.

By keeping the arrested folks operating in the criminal world, it prevents them from establishing more normal relationships. Certain cops, with their caring and considerate personalities, have a way to continually reminding the arrested individual, that they are subhuman. Nevertheless, we probably don't want overly sensitive cops, for sensitive people sometimes have a problem with getting aggressive, when it's a clear necessity. It would be nice if cops weren't prone to being overly aggressive and racist. The use of confidential informants needs to be overseen by people, other than cops. The reasons for this are obvious. Perhaps, the registered confidential informants should have to also be seen by a state-sponsored counselor to assure their success in the noncriminal world.

There are a few primary reasons why the United States locks away so many people... fewer voting blacks and browns... more cheap prison labor for various manufacturing corporations... more money for the ever-growing private prison corporations...

prisoners are not considered to be amongst the unemployed. Additionally, the longer minorities remain locked away, the less they tend to procreate, ergo minority populations are attenuated, which means less welfare.

In the early 1970s, even when the informant had worked-off their penance, the cops would further persuade them to inform, by offering them percentages on the resultant takes (recovered/stolen merchandise, or drugs), usually ten percent the value of the non-drug goods, and occasionally some of the confiscated drugs. Consequently, in my drug dealing days, I had to remain on my toes. In addition, some dealers were allowed to keep dealing, but not just to help the cops to bust people, but they could also keep some of their clients for profit. These techniques also encouraged criminals to remain criminals.

If the informant helped the cops to recover a stolen item or bust someone with drugs, the informant could sometimes be paid ten cent of the value of said items or drugs. Sometimes the payoff was in recovered money, other times it was actual product, i.e., drugs from the police evidence room. This technique was short-lived (though something tells me it still goes on), because it was determined

that it was producing too many negative results. Perhaps, the registered CIs should also work with a counselor to better assure their transition/success in the noncriminal world. Current techniques also help to keep the informant, from escaping the criminal world. Cops operate with a great deal of latitude. They are allowed to do things, including violent things, and yet they have considerably less training/abilities than certain other professionals.

For example, the informants would tell known thieves, who they casually knew, about where there was something of value, which could be easily stolen (large boats on trailers which could simply be hooked-up to a trailer hitch and driven away... collector coins, gold, and silver stashes in small safes which could be dragged out of the house and into the bed of a pick-up truck... expensive gun collections... older women who had unsecured amounts of expensive jewelry, etc. Basically, the informant would inspire the theft. Once the theft had been carried-out, then the informant would turn-in the thief, whom they'd inspired, and the informant would be secretly rewarded, with ten percent of the value of the stolen merchandise. In southern Mobile, a city on the Gulf of Mexico, most of the time the

theft was expensive boats and motors mounted to trailers for easy transport. The thief would just park it somewhere handy, then throw a tarp over it and tie it down, until they had a buyer. Also the thief was a lot less likely to get caught or shot, when towing away a boat than breaking into a house or car. Informants were habitually friends with many criminals, hence they became fairly wealthy off this police-generated reward procedure.

Four of my twelve dealers were gay (three males and one female). One of the gay dealers dealt exclusively to the aged gays, who tended to be willing to pay inflated prices. The reason for using gay dealers was that pound for pound, the gay community ingested larger aggregates of drug. Moreover, gays were typically willing to pay more for quality drugs; often, twice the going price, and all the drugs I'd bring back from New Orleans were high quality.

Accordingly, I'd jack-up the price to the gay dealers. For many gays, drugs were a part of their life, almost like food and water. Gays were more casual about using drugs, as if it was an accepted norm. The three gay males, who worked for me, were not the feminine type. My female gay dealer was an

exquisitely beautiful black girl. Her hobbies were reading and playing chess. She was a certified genius, with a score of 152, tested by a licensed psychiatrist. Whenever I spoke with her, she wanted to hold my hand. Since she was gay, her gesture seemed misplaced, yet it conveyed a type of trust, and trust is critical in the illicit drug trade.

The face and figure of the black female lesbian was beyond exciting, so the handholding was tough to deal with, on one level. She wasn't the lipstick lesbian, but nor did she look or act like the bulldyke variety; still, a lesbian is what she was, and may still be. Where male gays don't tend to go straight with age, lesbians sometime do. Every time I saw her, I had an urge to be a voyeur, and she clearly knew I felt her sexuality. In a way, she was extremely feminine, but very straight-forward and assertive, in a masculine sort of way. Her shape was beyond erotic. She tended to talk about topics men usually discussed; motorcycles, tools, fast cars, action movies, sports, hot Hollywood actresses, karate movies, house repairs, etc. Nevertheless, it was easy to sense a bit of a feminine psyche. She lived in a house, with her girl friend, for free. Her rent was that each month, she complete various repair projects in

the house, so that the home owner could eventually sell it, and make a profit.

Frequently, I hoped that she was a bisexual. Only when I was about to leave Mobile, did I find out. Superficially, the gay male dealers, I dealt to, were outwardly pretty much indistinguishable from straight males. One was in the Air Force. Two owned small businesses: a fabric store and a hair salon. All four gays that worked for me, agreed that the drag queen variety of homosexual was no doubt capable of moving great amounts of drug, but was just too capricious, being dangerously given to emotional whimsy. To the best of my knowledge, I've never know such a person, but I did enjoy reading the book (1994), *Midnight in the Garden of Good and Evil*. The humor was over the top... great job, Mr. John Berendt. The book was a finalist for the Pulitzer, and won the 1995 Boeke Prize.

When recruiting a new dealer, I would initially front (advance the drugs on credit) my drugs, but never more than four hundred dollars worth... my cost. None of my twelve dealers knew exactly when I'd show-up to sell my wares, or to pick-up my money, so they had to constantly carry the cash on them. Never would I make an appointment, or tell

them when I'd return. Over time, I got to know the rate at which each of my dealers would sell their wares, so they never had to wait long, for me to resupply them. Each of my dealers would purchase anywhere from \$200 to \$3000 of my product per week. They had to agree not to sell for anyone other than me.

Sometimes, I might say, "I'll be back in a few days." That was about as much notice as I'd give them. To cover my ass, I'd leak bits of false information to give my dealers the impression that I resided in one of the near-by cities: Biloxi, Fairhope, Lillian, Montgomery, Pensacola, Gulfport, Milton, Bay Minette, Orange Beach, Perdido Key, Theodore, Daphne, etc.

Once while stepping through the front door of one of my dealer's homes, for no apparent reason, I swiveled my head around and momentarily caught sight of my wife driving by outside on the street, as if she'd been following me. Most likely it was just a coincidence. I didn't think she'd seen me, at least she never said anything about it, if indeed she had, but then she might have simply chosen not to mention it.

That minor event remains an indelible memory, since I was in the process of dropping-off about two

grand worth of product to the most paranoid of my dealers. The unexpected glimpse of my wife made me wonder if I could trust her, but only for a moment. Had she stopped, to question me, it would have likely screwed the deal! Indeed, my good wife was largely a trustworthy soul. Nonetheless, dealing drugs is best done in a paranoid state, and as mentioned, I was paranoid to begin with, so at times, when dealing, my life was a tawdry sweating tangle of repetitious suspicions; still, the money was hard to ignore. Gradually, I learned to put my mind on other things, on anything but my nagging cowardly trepidation. But if you're a dealer, you'd best not try to master your fears, less you become recklessly complacent. It was because of my carelessness and fatigue, that one bright hot day, I very nearly bought the farm, and got arrested. It was a terrifying event, which called into action every fear soaked neural circuit, my foolish young brain possessed. I was only barely able to extricate myself.

Harold, my illicit drug supplier, lived in the lower garden district of New Orleans, a few blocks off of Coliseum Square. But after my initial visit to what I thought was his home, each subsequent trip to the Big Easy, Harold would be living at a different

location. Whenever I'd go to get my drugs, we'd meet at a prearranged location, then Harold and I would drive around the city, usually stopping at different houses, etc., but I never actually knew if any of those places were his, or if it was just one of his friend's places. At other times, we stop by a store, or a bar, or a warehouse, where he'd keep his drug stash, or at least, one of them. Harold once told me that I was his favorite dealer, because I never asked question, sold whatever he gave me (except for hard drugs), and always paid him on time. In-turn, I expected the same from my dealers. I was barely sensitive enough not to ask Harold, where he actually lived. Something told me that he, often slept in hotel and motel rooms. In those days, you didn't have to show ID to rent a room, and cash was preferred.

No one in Mobile had any idea, when I'd leave to go to New Orleans, not even my wife. Perhaps, the only clue that I was going to New Orleans, was that I'd check the water in the car's radiator and battery, check the tire pressures, including the spare, and at some time during the week, I'd clean the spark plugs and points, gap them both, and check or change the oil. That was done to avoid a breakdown on highway I10, where it might be a State Trooper, who'd stop to

‘help’ me. Once, while on a vacation junket in New Orleans with my wife, I pretended to be completely unfamiliar with the city. Unfortunately, while walking around the French Quarter, I ran into one of Harold’s friends.

“Hey, Matt. How ya doin man?” He greeted me, thinking my name was Matt, which was the name I used in New Orleans, and he was expecting me to stop and talk; however, not wanting to have to explain things to my wife, I just waved, yelled hello back across the street, but kept right on moving. My wife, Margo, didn’t miss noticing the guy’s comment. She asked why he’d called me Matt, so I simply resorted to my life’s greatest talent.

“I must look like some guy named Matt, who probably lives around here. It’s a big city, and you know there’s a lot of stoned folks walking around New Orleans. This place is know for being the drug central.”

Every time, I’d make a drug run to New Orleans, I’d be back in Mobile within eight hours, and never once did I stay overnight. My wife just assumed I was working. I’d always make sure my delivery boys were set to throw their routes, before heading out to the big NO. Usually, I’d give Pig a few bucks to keep an

eye on my district. On the return leg of the trip, I'd work-up a good story-line for my wife, about the days events to cover my long absence. If the supervisor noticed my absence, which only happened twice, I lied, and told him that I was having sex with a hooker. That way, he wouldn't say anything to my wife.

Many years later, hurricane Katrina devastated New Orleans, during the seriously tragic catastrophe, all I could think was that if there was a God, that he or she couldn't have selected a more drug-rich-target to demolish, unless maybe it was Columbia, Afghanistan, Amsterdam, or the poppy fields of the golden triangle. Granted, I am sure there were some remarkably good people in New Orleans, who desperately needed help, and I was shocked at how easily the government turned its' back on the poor black population. Nevertheless, the New Orleans which I had known, was filled with illegal drug action, and nearly every cop in the city was crooked as a barrel of rattlesnakes, and sometimes more dangerous. From what I saw, almost every cop, who got to the level of detective or sergeant, supported the crime industry, and a few had even worked as hired assassins. There was also a fair amount of

nepotism in the department. Crooked cops in Mexico City (MC), where I was soon to live, were nothing like those in New Orleans, but only because there was an entirely different meaning to the word, 'crooked.' What was considered as crooked in the US, was business as usual in Mexico City. Accepting bribes from individuals they'd just arrested, and caught red handed committing some small drug (drugs valued less than \$1000) infraction was simply a \$50 fine to be paid to the cop, at the time of arrest. If there was a larger amount of drug, the MC cop would impose a greater fine. It made sense, for why not let the criminal pay for his sins, rather than the taxpayer... no need for jails, attorneys, judges, juries, probation officers, etc.? Besides, the cops in MC were vastly underpaid, and such an accepted procedure supplemented their meager income. Besides, working as a cop in MC was much more dangerous, than working in NO. From having observed both systems, I'd say the MC legal system was more just.

The first time I meant Harold, my future New Orleans drug supplier, was at the same redneck Mobile restaurant, where the district manager lunches were held. Early one evening, I'd stayed in town to help some paperboys collect from their more

obstinate customers. I hadn't lunched that day, so I went to the restaurant to grab some ham and eggs. While waiting for the waitress to deliver my food, I saw Harold sitting in a booth with his latest 'high class squeeze,' as he called her, when she'd gone to the bathroom. The pair were traveling back to the New Orleans, after supposedly 'vacationing' in KeyWest, having stayed at one of the Robert Maloney cottages, now called the *Key Lime Inn*. Harold was all about staying at historical spots, including places in New Orleans and Paris. He claimed to have French royal ancestry, but then, so did a lot of weird folks in New Orleans.

Harold was a short, lean, and very quick little fella with an oversized head, topped-off with a bushel of reddish blond curly hair, giving him the appearance of a younger thinner version of Albert Einstein. His 'high class squeeze' was your basic hooker: large well formed tits and ass, small waist, tight jeans, wearing a small *Saints* T-shirt, which showed-off her belly button. Her skin was adorned with a variety of tattoos, and she teetered on a pair of worn-out white high-heels. She had a moderately pleasant face, and was definitely the kind of girl, who made you think about the importance of buying

condoms.

The heels and her silent indifference, to Harold's comments, said she was strictly temporary. Her drooping eyelids told me that she was already half in the bag, but while she didn't have much to say, everything else about her was singing an age old song. When she went to the ladies room, Harold looked my direction and asked me if I'd like to give her a go. Diplomatically, I said she was hot, but that I'd pass, and politely thanked him for the offer, not because I didn't want to, but because I had the odd feeling that Harold would have wanted to join in, and that kind of thing is not my cup of tea, but I don't judge.

The always vigilant Harold remarked that the next time he'd party in KeyWest, he was going to sail across the Gulf of Mexico on his schooner. He didn't look old enough to own, much less captain, a schooner. So at first, I just figured he was a big talker, out to impress people, but when I started asking about the sailboat and sailing, he talked at length about celestial navigation, how he'd gone to Costa Rica to buy the vessel from an English cannery owner, and pulled out his leather trucker-type chained wallet to produce a few photos of the black

and white monster sailing ship. That's when I noticed that the dual-snapped billfold was packed with a one inch thick stack of crisp hundred dollar bills. Later, using a stack of new one dollar bills, I estimated Harold's stash to be roughly twenty grand. His sailing commentary, the photos, and the money, not to mentioned his rather valuable jewelry, implied that the schooner might not have been a fabrication, though in all the time I knew him, I never actually saw the vessel, nor did Harold ever speak of the ship, again.

In my aged mind, he remains an enigmatic character. I've recently been to New Orleans, to see if I could locate Harold, but had no luck. I wasn't looking for business, but simply wanted to tell him, 'hello.' After eating, the three of us strolled out into the side parking lot, with Harold giving, his 'high class squeeze,' plenty of support. As we headed toward the restaurant exit, every redneck in the dining area was eyeballing the girl's attributes. Between her wobbly high heels, and her altered neurochemistry, her balance was questionable, but her sex appeal was never in doubt.

As thanks for Harold paying for my meal, I reached through my car window, and into my

glovebox, and handed him an extra fat doobie. Instead of just taking it and driving-off, he invited me to sit in the back seat of his roomy Mercedes, and the three of us smoked it. Thank God there were no windows on that side of the restaurant so the diners, could see us. Harold and his 'squeeze' sat in the front, while I stretched-out in the white leather backseat. As we passed around the joint, Harold laid-out the inventory of drugs he could front me (give me on credit), how much I would owe him, as well as suggestions on how much to sell them for. With each type of drug, I would generally, double, triple, or every now and then, quadruple my profit. Harold gave me his phone numbers, told me how to talk on the phone. Phrases about such things as my health, my diet, fishing, the car, the weather, etc., each had a particular meaning. Since I was stoned, I took the time to go to my car and fetch a pen and a spiral notebook, to write everything down. My memory was always faulty on weed, and these coded phrases were too important to forget.

Harold laughed, since he too understood about 'the death of the short-term memory on ganja.' His three different phone numbers regularly were changed. All my calls were made to and from pay

phones, and at appointed times: noon, 1:05, 2:10, 3:15, 4:20 (meant to be humorous), 5:25, or 6:30. The different times corresponded to different days of the week. If I called an appointed pay phone number on Monday, I'd call at noon, if it was Tuesday, I'd call at 1:05, 2:10 on Wednesday, 3:15 on Thursday, Friday was 4:20, Saturday was 5: 25, Sunday was 6:30. Mobile and New Orleans are in the same time zone, so that was never a problem. This time table, allowed Harold to safely accept my calls, only when he was prepared, meaning he had product available, and to know it was me calling. If he didn't answer right away, I'd just hang-up and call at the appointed time for the next day.

Said code words and phrases would change with each visit to New Orleans. If I said, "My Aunt is filing for divorce," that might mean that I was ready to leave Mobile to come pick-up the drugs from Harold. If he said, "Too bad! I'm sorry to hear about your Aunt...", that meant he wasn't ready to sell, but the fact that he'd answered my call, simply meant to call back in the next day or two. However, if he said, "Good, her husband was a worthless bum, anyway. She needs to 'leave' him," that meant all was good, I needed to 'leave,' and to come ahead to New Orleans.

If I said that I hated the long-distance charges of pay-phones, that they were way too expensive, it meant that I was looking to spend a lot of money. By not mentioning the payphone charges it meant I was buying less than ten grand worth of product, but only once was that the case. If Harold said that he agreed that payphone cost too much, that meant that he could handle the large order. If he didn't say that, it meant that he was low on product, and he had less than ten grand worth of dope to sell.

I'd then mention a time he could expect my next call, once I was in New Orleans. "I'm going to catch a movie this afternoon. It's a 4 o'clock showing of *Mean Streets*, a Martin Scorsese movie." Once in New Orleans, I'd call to let him know by calling and saying something like "I've 'finally' recovered from that bad cold," meant I was in New Orleans, or if I said, "I'm ready for a drink...", it meant for Harold to meet me at the pay-phone in front of *Lafitte's Blacksmith Bar* on Bourbon Street. Harold never made me wait longer than an hour. Sometimes he brought the product with him, but usually I rode with him to pick it up. Every now and then, he'd loan me a pistol, which I never had to use, and I always gave it back, before I left NO. His concern was not the cops, but

rival drug dealers.

If we had to change a phone number, and wanted to state the new phone number, while on the phone, we'd just add the day of the month to the actual phone number, so when he or I called the number, we just subtracted the date. In other words, if Harold told me to call him back in ten minutes at 433-7650, and it was August 16th, when I called him back, I subtract 16 from the number, and dial 433-7634. Simple stuff like that worked. On the phone, we never discussed anything like: the types of drugs, the precise amounts, money, actual locations, etc. After covertly talking about business, we'd carry-on a normal conversation for at least five to ten minutes, about anything: sports, something we'd seen in the news, a new movie which was showing, anything which came to mind. And while this extra conversation was designed as subterfuge, we often enjoyed the talk, and it served to build trust. All these things were Harold's ideas.

For some reason, Harold was keenly interested in stories involving Winston Churchill. What Harold enjoyed about Churchill was that the man was flawed in many small ways, but great in the things that mattered, at least that was how Harold thought

of the man. Of course, Harold considered his own flaw of drug dealing to be minor. Likewise, I considered my drug dealing to be inconsequential. Harold claimed to know about Churchill's drug addiction. Doctor Lord Moran supposedly put Churchill on what was known as 'reds,' or Seconal, a strong rapid-acting barbiturate, that can easily kill a person in high doses, and is particularly pernicious when mixed with alcohol, and Churchill was a serious boozier. According to Harold, Churchill also used Amytal, a ten pound sledgehammer of a sleeping pill. That drug is now considered too dangerous to be used. How is it that the drug is so dangerous, yet Churchill survived? Just maybe that says something about the man. During operational times, to work longer, Harold claimed Churchill used benzedrine, which he (procured from an *RAF (Royal Air Force)* doctor (perhaps, his name was Roland Winfield). I'd later know an older English research scientist, who confirmed the *RAF's* use of that powerful stimulant drug, during WWII. Maybe, WWII was the first war to be a war of stimulant drugs, where both sides used massive amounts of stimulant pharmaceuticals.

Sometimes, I've tried to imagine what the world

war must have been like for someone like Churchill. The pressures had to have been immeasurable, where highly complex decisions had to be made, with massive amounts of death, and the fate of the free world hanging in the offing. Perhaps drugs were the only way a normal person could deal with such extraordinary circumstances. For example in 1940, Winston Churchill was confronted with making a terrible choice. France had surrendered and nothing separated England from the deadly Nazis threat, except for the narrow English Channel, and Germany was about to takeover the entire French fleet, which at that time, was one of the largest armadas in the world. With those French ships, Hitler's threat to invade England would become a reality, and England would have likely fallen.

Churchill could either rely on the promises of the new French government that they wouldn't hand the ships to Hitler, or Churchill could make sure that the ships never became part of the German navy, by destroying them. The French Admiral had promised the English that they would not turn themselves over to the Germans, but rather, that they (the French) were going to sail to the United States. Then, the British intercepted a radio message from the Vichy

Government, ordering French reinforcements to move urgently to Oran, so Churchill ordered his commanders to attack, "Settle everything before dark or you will have reinforcements to deal with." An hour and a half later, the British Fleet began unmercifully shelling the French ships.

In less than ten minutes, 1,297 French soldiers were dead, and 3 capital ships, along with 1 destroyer, were severely damaged or totally destroyed. Churchill's decision is regarded by some as a turning point in the war, others believed it a horrible betrayal, if not a war crime, since many innocent Frenchman were killed. Try to imagine what it must have been like having to kill all those innocent allies, when they'd promised you, that they wouldn't turn over the ships, but you realized that sometimes promises can't be kept. It's no wonder Churchill took to using addicting drugs. But then, so did Hitler. Those were men, operating in realms far beyond normal human tolerance. Harold (my drug supplier) had gotten these stories during conversations with the older English gentleman, from whom he'd purchased the schooner. Supposedly, that man's

father had been one of Churchill's younger physicians.

During all my dealings with Harold, I was never allowed to select the types of drugs to be purchased from him, other than I didn't buy hard drugs. I could only choose from whatever it was he happened to have available. No matter what drug I would buy, it could easily be sold in Mobile. Never could I tell Harold what my customers preferred or request a particular popular drug. He didn't say I couldn't make requests, but I could sense he preferred I didn't. Dealing with Harold was kind of like owning a *McDonald's* franchise, I could only sell what Corporation-Harold furnished. If corporate changed the menu, so be it. Never did I have the slightest inkling about where Harold procured his drugs, but for all I know, the aforementioned schooner might have played a role. Perhaps, that was why Harold never again mentioned the schooner, and frequently sported a tan, during the winter months.

The day when I first met Harold at the restaurant, and I was relaxing on the backseat of his Mercedes

smoking a joint with him and his 'high class squeeze,' he'd suggested that I line-up a few people, as potential dealers, and begin watching and checking them out, for at least a couple of months, before I said anything to them about them selling drugs for me. He gave me lots of advice on how to screen potential dealers, and how to manage them, to keep from being busted. First thing was to get stoned with them, pretending to be a novice smoker myself. Then, persuade them to buy me some small amount of weed.

Harold advised never to use anyone as a dealer, who had been arrested, regardless of whether they'd been found guilty or not. Never use someone, who is in a serious long-term relationship, since people generally confide in their significant other, and the significant others can be later be a significant problem with the police. He advised to choose outgoing people, but not people who had lots of close friends, but people who had lots of casual acquaintances. This was reasonable, in lieu of the fact that highly intelligent people generally don't mind being alone, unless they have mental issues. Never use someone, who has

ever had a mental health issue or a problem with addiction. Never use a person, who wasn't quick, and alert. Never use someone, who habitually gambles. Never select anyone under the age of twenty-two, but no older than forty.

Make sure that I actually saw their ID to verify their age, and to make sure I knew other people, who knew them. Never use anyone who is related to, or even knows, any police. Never use anyone who lives in an extremely poor or high crime neighborhood, and always know where my dealers live, work, and hangout. Forget use strippers, hookers, firemen, effeminate gay males, military personnel (I violated that rule), unemployed persons, or anyone with a serious health problem. Those rules eliminate a large percentage of the population. Never sell to anyone, except to my dealers. Never become close friends with my dealers.

In the backseat of the Mercedes, I wrote down all these rules, and followed almost all of them. A couple of years later, breaking one of those rules very nearly ruined my life. The list of suggested dealer

characteristics was long, and only slightly flexible. Harold mentioned that it was okay to initially front them a modicum of drugs, but after that, to always demand full payment, and let them know that one failure to pay, canceled the relationship permanently.

After about an hour chat, Harold drove-off with his ‘high class squeeze,’ saying that he looked forward to doing business with me. I wondered if he would have rejected me, had he known I’d been a childhood alcoholic, and was married, violating two of his own rules. Harold had violated his own rules, by confiding in me. But, I never told him I was a childhood alcoholic, nor that I was married, plus he didn’t know where I lived. Furthermore, Harold had selected me, without a real screening, or significant period of observation, and that was also something he had recommended I do with my dealers. For some reason, he had granted me instant trust. There’s nothing quite like instantaneous trust, based on sharing lunch, and a fat doobie. That is probably only a youthful thing. The older I get, the harder it is to trust people, and the more I prefer the company of my dog.

But, as it turned-out, Harold was right; he could trust me and visa versa. He drove out of the parking-lot, and I was left with my notes, and my low-paying exhausting newspaper job, and a good wife, who to my chagrin, was pressuring me to have kids, which I couldn't possibly afford, nor had I the time to help raise kids. In a way, Harold's offer represented hope, a way to free myself from the minimum wage rut. That's just one of the reasons why America now locks-up more of its citizens than any country on earth. Drugs represent hope, unlike a job at McDonalds. No family can survive on that pay.

While I dearly loved those twenty paperboys, they were way too much work, their problems were insurmountable, and working with them was fast burning me down. Often, I was working more than seventy hours a week, and so, I was frequently exhausted. As the months passed, I realized that I was selling drugs and burying jars of cash and drugs, so that I could get away from Mobile, yet I was still there; as Bob Dylan says, "*Stuck inside of Mobile with the Memphis blues....*," and I definitely had the blues,

yet I knew nothing about Memphis; still, I knew that anywhere was better than Mobile.

When I went to New Orleans, to pick-up my first load of drugs, I had only acquired one trusted dealer. My first load was only a single large brick of hash, one kilo in weight. After selling that fronted kilo, using my one dealer, I promptly repaid Harold, and put all the profits back into a second load, more than twice the size of the first. Meanwhile, I acquired a second dealer, then kept on buying drugs from Harold and acquiring new dealers, until I had about a dozen. After that, I leveled-off and became what you might call a mid-level dealer. Two of those dozen dealers only worked off and on for me, usually around the holidays, when the drug trade tended to increase, and when they needed more money. The Christmas holidays were always the most lucrative. I'd managed to get the dozen dealers in less than two months, barely violating Harold's sage advice, as scribbled in my spiral notebook.

Just for the media hype, if I'd been busted, I'd have been considered, by the cops as a top level dealer. The same thing applies to the value of drugs. If I'd been busted with drugs, which I'd purchased for

ten thousand dollars cash; on the news, the same drugs would have been said to be worth one hundred thousand dollars. This happens with virtually every drug bust in America, and generally the public believes the lies. What also transpires, is that during these drug busts, about half to eighty percent of the drugs never make it to the police evidence room, and if the bust involves cash, it's even less likely to make it into evidence.

According to Harold, after a few months, I had become his most prolific dealer, of the non-addictive drugs, but I found that difficult to believe, since he lived in New Orleans, for that strange culturally diverse city, literally seemed like America's illegal drug headquarters. Where many people enjoy that city, I never have. It's too dirty and there's way too much crime, much of which doesn't get reported, so that the tourists keep coming. At the core of America's soft underbelly is a port city filled with massive amounts of drugs, owing to its vast number of crooked cops.

Harold was almost always surrounded by various types of unusual people: artists, engineers, bums, criminals of various sorts, bikers, models, hookers, oil rig workers, fishermen, etc., who for all I knew

could later be called in, to testify against me. Still, neither Harold nor any of his nefarious friends ever caused me the slightest problem. Sometimes I wondered if Harold worked for the government. While I had given Harold my correct first name, I had the good sense to give him a phony last name. In yet another violation of his own rules, he'd never seen my ID. Moreover, the day I'd meant Harold, he couldn't have seen my car tag, the way my car was parked. As mentioned, I had persuaded Harold to introduce me to his friends as Matt, who'd been my friend, who had the neuroblastoma and had experienced a miracle healing, by killing the hallucinogenic bear. Moreover, whenever I went to NO, I'd park so that my car tag couldn't be seen, unless of course I had a stolen tag on the back. Paranoia made me generate a needless abundance of subterfuge.

The impression I got was that Harold just operated way too wide open, without the slightest fear of getting arrested, most likely because he had several cops in the *NOPD* in his pocket, or maybe he did work for the government. There was a fair chance, that the cops were cutting into Harold's profits. According to Harold, every so often, a cop

would kill another cop simply to take over the dead cop's client 'book.' Consequently, in the *NOPD*, it really paid to know your partner, since it was the partner, who best knew the client book and what the clients were paying. As stated, the *New Orleans Police Department* was exceptionally well known for corruption. Murder was fairly common place. At the time, the *DEA* had only been around for two years, and wouldn't become significantly effective, until around 1980, so once you owned the local police, you were pretty much home free in NO. Recently, more than 500 NO police officers 'voluntarily' retired in the wake of a federal investigation, leaving one of the nation's most crime-ridden cities struggling to enforce the law. How would it have looked, if those 500 cops had been arrested?

Parts of post-Katrina New Orleans currently look like Beirut's green line, post-war. Now, I only go to New Orleans to get on the occasional cruise ship. Per capita New Orleans has more crime than New York. I'd actually pay not to have to live there!

After I'd been working with Harold for about six months, one early evening, he took me for lunch and drinks, and introduced me to a Detective Vincent Vocelli, a long tall drink of water, maybe six foot six,

with long flaming red hair, and well manicured nails, coated with clear polish. *He looks like a wanta-be pimp.* Perhaps, the long red hair and polished nails were supposed to be parts of his narco camouflage. Vince strictly worked narcotics.

It was an Italian restaurant, *Antoine's*, and it appeared to be empty, except for the three of us, and a waiter, who reminded me of Mike Tyson, only with darker skin, and without the tiger tattoo. The waiter seemed dangerous and to be friends with the detective. Most of the time at the restaurant, the waiter stood behind me, and I did my best to appear unfazed. Vince certainly looked Irish but sported an Italian surname, so I wondered whether the name was real. He claimed his mom was from Dublin, Ireland, and that his dad was from Massa, Italy. I didn't have much faith in his words. Vince talked little, and continually pulled his mouth to one side, affecting an expression of impatience, or perhaps he was putting on an air of superiority. Periodically, he'd drum his fingers on the table perchance to showoff his polished nails and to demonstrate agitation. Eye contact was not Vince's strong point. *Is he expecting trouble?*

In Vince's presence, I remained paranoid, yet did

my best to be friendly, saying just enough to remain cordial, but nothing which related to my life in Mobile. Harold and Vince seemed to be completely mismatched as friends. Harold the extremely short and thin, a hyper-maniac talkative type, and scary Vince was the tall hushed nervous introvert. After the introduction to the worrisome detective, I didn't sleep well for a week. Wrongly, I assumed that he was going to bust me, and probably my photo had been covertly made during our meeting, and it wouldn't be long, and one night there'd be a knock at my door. Two cops would be standing there, with a warrant and handcuffs at the ready. But, that knock never came... all that useless paranoia for nothing. Nevertheless, I was about to get a rude awakening. I've always gotten hungry at night, and will get-up eat, brush my teeth, and return to the bed. One night, a couple of days after meeting Vince, the detective, I got-up to go get a snack in the kitchen, but when I opened the bedroom door, Vince was standing there smiling, with handcuffs in one hand and a thick delicious cheeseburger, in the other. Quickly, I reached for the cheeseburger, which caused me to awaken, sit-up, and walk to the kitchen to nervously raid the frig. Whenever, I got up to eat, my wife never awoke. She always slept the sleep of

the righteous.

Once recovered from the shock of meeting the detective, I realized that Harold had actually given me the precious gift of police protection, when I was in New Orleans. Looking back, in every respect, Harold was an honest man, yet he was a drug dealer. Many drug dealers are more trustworthy than a lot of self-proclaimed Christians. The idea was that if I ever got in trouble in New Orleans, and found myself in jail, all I had to do was to ask for Detective Vince Vocelli, and I'd be set free, with not so much as an arrest record. Vince would just say that I was a confidential informant, and that whatever drugs I was caught with, was because I was cooperating with the detective. Years later, Nancy Reagan would lead the 'War on Drugs,' with the catch slogan, *Just say NO*. For me the word, NO, in that popular slogan stood for New Orleans. With so many crooked cops, drugs in New Orleans might as well have been legal. There were countless addicts in New Orleans, ergo the local hospital stayed slammed, with victims of drug-related shooting, and addict overdoses. Addicts went for help to NO, from surrounding states. Many years later, I'd transport a dying addict to *Charity (New Orleans Hospital)*, and they saved her life. A few

years later, she was still clean, and looked healthy and happy. No one on the planet knew how to clinically treat addicts like the folks at *Charity*. That hospital was started way back in 1736, by a wealthy French shipbuilder. It was originally called the *Hospital of Saint John* or *L'Hopital des Paupers de la Charite* (The Charity Hospital for the Poor). The hospital was the second oldest hospital in the US. Sadly, hurricane Katrina destroyed *Charity Hospital*, causing the resident addicts, to flee to neighboring states, where many suffered withdrawals while being untreated. No doubt some of them died.

After meeting the weird tall NOPD detective, I stopped carrying my ID, when visiting New Orleans. If Vince ever had to bail me out of the downtown jail, it would have been best, if I didn't have a recorded arrest in my name, which would need to be awkwardly expunged by Vince. Harold advised me that far more cops were dirty than were clean in the Big Easy, about a ten to one ratio, dirty to clean. That was a happy thought, and for a while, I thought about moving to New Orleans, but my wife, our house, and my family, as well as all our friends, were in Mobile. In lieu of what was about to happen, I should have moved.

Strangely, Harold the drug dealer, was the kind of person, who needed to be surrounded by people. Luckily for me, the visitors were generally so doped-up, that they paid me little attention; still as a weak precaution, I occasionally used a heavy Spanish accent with a few Spanish phrases thrown in. Wrongly, I assumed that the NO was the biggest chink in my armor, but I'd soon realize that I was most vulnerable in Mobile.

Usually, before handing me the drugs, Harold would take me on a brief ride, and we'd end-up in some strange place, where he'd have hidden a stash reserved for me. He could have gotten the drugs before he came to meet me, but he always preferred riding somewhere with me. During the ride, Harold would often fill me in on historical aspects of New Orleans. For example, the first opera production in the United States was held in New Orleans in 1796. Harold would also ask me questions about my dealers. Mostly, he was interested in whether I could trust my dealers. Each time I went to see Harold, his stash was in a different location: an abandoned garage, under a stack of wooden pallets behind an empty building, on top of a kitchen cabinet in an old blind man's apartment, taped in plastic bags under

the workbench of a closed carpentry shop, inside a filthy torn-up giant pink teddy bear jammed behind a bookcase in the back room of a defunct thrift store, under a pile of rusty tin siding in an abandoned warehouse, etc. Harold was imaginative and constantly moving his stashes. Never did I get a handle on just how many people he supplied with drugs. I always refrained from asking him questions, which could potentially worry him.

Although he didn't always tell me things about his business, he never deceived me as far as our dealings went, and in that respect, he proved to be extremely honest. Lots of drug dealers rationalize their destructive profiteering, by saying that if it wasn't them selling the drugs, it would be someone else. This is not too different from the way Big Pharma never creates any drug cures, only overpriced marginal treatments, or how the MIC kills for profit, or how coal-fired power plants are destroying earth, and charging you for the power. Don't you just love people, who refer to coal, as being 'clean coal.' But unlike those businesses, Harold admitted that he was a 'full-fledged scumbag,' his words. While I didn't deal the hard stuff (heroin and cocaine), Harold did. The reason I was certain about this was

that every-so-often, he try to get me to sell them, telling me how much more money I could have been making. But I remained a slightly lesser scumbag. You'll be my judge.

Even though I felt decidedly vulnerable in New Orleans, I foolishly thought of myself as being in control and relatively safe in Mobile; after all it was my home turf, but as mentioned, the reverse proved true. With all the above-mentioned precautionary techniques I employed, I figured it would be next to impossible for the police to set me up. Erroneously, I assumed that my greatest weakness was the fact that my license plate was sometimes visible to my dealers, so when visiting a dealer, I'd occasionally put stolen plates on my car, but that was probably a waste of time.

If the cops ever pulled me over, when I had a stolen license-plate on my car, I'd have just said that I didn't know how it got there; that someone had obviously stolen my tag for some nefarious reason. Moreover, I'd have politely asked the cop to run my VIN number, and he could see that I indeed paid for a valid plate, making it clear that someone must be playing a trick on me. With the bogus plate on the back of my car, I'd generally park, so that my dealers

could easily see it, just incase they'd been busted, and were working for the cops. The idea was that they'd give the bogus plate number to the cops, thereby discrediting the busted dealer. After displaying the tag in such a manner, I'd return it to the car I'd taken it from, as soon as circumstances safely permitted. The more non-guilt related variables you manage to introduce into a legal situation, the more you, or your attorney, have to work with, if later you're trying to workout an exculpatory solution. The more related memories in your brain's hippocampus, the more material the frontal lobes then have to consider, compare, and contrast, to contrive useful explanations for a jury or judge. Its that way with all the major religions, as well. The greater the complexity, the more: written material, sermons, songs, prayers, chants, rituals, that the religion provides, the easier it becomes to justify your particular position or belief. But as it turned-out that day, my weakness was that I'd let myself become so fatigued, that I wasn't thinking clearly, and so I'd become reckless.

Of course, the problem with using stolen plates was that the police might be looking for them, but usually only if they've been reported stolen, and the

cops would only run your plate, if you committed a traffic violation, or were involved in an accident. While the plates were indeed stolen, in reality, I had only borrowed them. In my district there was several older ladies, who rarely left their homes. They'd only use their cars on Saturday mornings to go to the grocery store, or on Sunday mornings to go to church, and rarely drove at other times. As mentioned, my district seven was the poorest district in Mobile, so the older women often could not afford the gasoline and the upkeep on their cars. The other days of the week, the cars stayed in their small closed, but unlocked wooden garages. Once one of the elderly ladies was asleep, and they tended to go to bed at sundown, I'd sneak into one of their garage, armed with a couple of tools (a crescent wrench and a screwdriver), and a flashlight, to remove (borrow) their car tag, always using cotton gardening gloves. I was also careful not to leave footprints, if their garbage had a dirt floor. Safely inside the closed windowless garage, I could safely accomplish the task unobserved. Later, I'd return the tag the same way.

Around two or three Sunday night/Monday morning, I'd borrow a car tag. A few times, to add

more subterfuge, I'd put the old lady's tag on a notorious thug's car, and that was a more risky procedure. Since thugs are usually up all night, I'd put the older lady's tag on his car, during the afternoon edition of the paper, again always using gloves. He kept his car in a back alley, where I could work unobserved. Typically, he hung-out on his front porch with a few friends, so there was no problem with my being seen in the alley. Thugs are typically careful about they're driving habits, since cops are apt to racially profile, but the thug never imagined anyone would dare to switch his license plate. To remove and replace the tag more safely, I'd have one of my paperboys knock on the door and distract the dealer by offering him a free newspaper, and then beg him to subscribe. If I needed more time, the paperboy would ask the drug dealer to keep his eyes peeled for a good used bicycle, he'd also take the chain off his bike before approaching the dealer, and complain that his bike was broken, and the dealer would help put the kid to put the chain back on. Almost universally, black drug dealers are good to children, and as strange as it may seem, not because they viewed them as potential dealers or customers, but because they actually like the kids.

Rare is the criminal, who is not acceptable in some ways.

Born on the Run by Rommel A.

Modrey

Coincidentally, that thug's car was the same make and model as mine, only a different color, with fancier wheels. I'd put the thug's tag on my car, and the next day, I'd park my car, so that my newest drug dealer could get a good look at the thug's tag on my car. That way, if my dealer was working for the cops, he or she'd actually be giving the cops the plate of a known dealer. For the next few days, I'd keep an eye on said dealer, and the old lady's tag, to determine, if one of my dealers had turned on me. As mentioned, all that subterfuge may have been a waste of time.

On the other hand, the tag switching thing may have been what saved me from getting a visit from the police at my house. For indeed one of my dealers did finally get busted, and described me to the police. If he gave them the old lady's tag or the thug's tag, I dodged a home visit by the police. The home visit would have been okay, since I didn't keep any drugs at my house, but such a visit would have certainly tipped my hand to my good wife. Still, I

was prepared, since I had once told my wife that I'd found someone squatting behind my car, and assumed that they were trying to break in the car's trunk, but I'd surprised them, before they could do so, and the guy had run away. That way, if later an issue had arisen concerning my tag, I could claim that the tag must have been switched at time, when I'd saw the person squatting down behind the car.

Without the phony tag, when visiting one of my dealers, I'd first drive around the surrounding area, to make sure the cops weren't laying in wait for me to show-up, then I'd park far enough away that the dealer couldn't see my legitimate tag, yet close enough, that I could get to my car with thirty-seconds of sprinting. Oddly enough, not one of my dealers would ask me why I'd parked away.

When feeling extra paranoid, I'd take a cab, and ask the cabbie to wait in front of a store, saying that I'd be shopping for about fifteen or twenty minutes, and to keep the meter running. I'd ask him if he needed to use the restroom, before I'd leave the cab, and check his gas needle to make sure that the driver wouldn't leave me to go get gas. To better ensure that he wouldn't drive away, I'd also give him a little cash in advance, and imply there'd later be a

generous tip, which there would be.

Exiting the cab, I'd enter the store, as if I was going to purchase a few things. Slowly, I'd amble through the aisles, then covertly sneak out the back door, run to my near-by dealer, accept the cash from him, and hand him or her the new drugs, then quickly leave to reenter the rear door of said store. Often the actual exchange was done in a locked public bathroom, or the back room of a store, but sometimes outside right behind a building, while I'd be on the lookout. After the exchange, I'd jog back to the store and enter through the back door, buy a couple of cheap necessities, climb back in the taxi with my few purchases, and ride back to within a couple of blocks of where my car was parked, pay and tip the driver, and get out.

Back then, the majority of the cabbies used drugs, as many do today. Lots of cabbies are indirect drug dealers, in that when a new person comes to town and doesn't know where to buy drugs, the cabbie will happily show them for a price. For that service, the cabbie is usually not only paid by the customer, but by the dealer, as well. But, that's exactly why I didn't trust cabbies, because they are easy to bust, and would therefore were working for

the cops. Consequently, when I spoke with a cabbie, I pretended to be anti-drug, and a straight arrow. All these precautions were also likely unnecessary.

To better protect myself, I'd pretend that every encounter with each of my dealers was as if he or she had already betrayed me, and was working with the cops. I went so far as to make sure that whatever container I gave them, which held the drugs, possessed a rough surface so that fingerprints were not a concern. I'd frequently use small film containers, or mini shampoo bottles, the surfaces of which I sanded with a coarse grit sandpaper, or I'd use the wire-brush wheel on the bench grinder. Sometimes, I'd just wrapped the container with old type of rough shaggy cloth electricians tape, not the shiny black kind.

Preferring to keep my dealers hungry, and not wanting to seem too pushy, I'd wait long enough between each visit, so that there was no problem with them having unsold product. Many times, I had drugs in my car, I'd also keep a half-full quart can of a mixture of acetone, moonshine, and gasoline, with a screw-on metal cap, under the seat. It was the type of squarish quart can that painter thinner used to come in. Once my wife Margo found it, so I told her

that I kept in the car to pour in the carburetor, if the engine was having trouble starting. If I'd been pulled over by the cops, all I would have had to do was to hold the can between my thighs, unscrew the lid, pour the pills, tabs, microdots, grams of hash, or whatever drug I had, into the can, screw the lid on, shake it once or twice, and shove it back under the carseat using the heel of my shoe, and the evidence would have been destroyed. At least twice a day, I'd practice that maneuver, but of course without actually destroying drugs. When traveling back from New Orleans with a larger stash of drugs, I'd carry a five gallon paint bucket, a quarter full with the same mixture. The lid would be loose, only held in place with a couple of pieces of tape, so I didn't have to breathe the fumes, yet could easily remove the lid, if stopped by a cop. Still, I never was pulled-over.

Each of my dealers possessed distinctly different personalities and their own methods for dealing. One of them was a particularly happy-go-lucky soul. He was an extremely hyperactive, and a manic type of fellow. He pumped gas at a corner gas station, bordering a major intersection, just north of the Mobile city-limits, near Chickasaw. The dynamically energetic little fellow was way too bold, frequently

selling my wares right out of the gas station. He'd solicit potential drug customers as he pumped gas into their cars, and cleaned their windshields. Apparently, he was extremely good at judging people: those who used, versus those who were not so inclined. He boldly carried-out his dealing, by sleight of hand, in full view of the general public. Most likely, those people who didn't use, just assumed that he was kidding. At first, his brazenness terrified me, and I was prone to stop supplying him. Frequently, I found myself wondering how much more blatant he might have been, when I wasn't watching. On the other hand, he may have just been showing-off to impress me. With every visit, I'd briefly lecture him about being more cautious.

“Regular or high-test, beer, acid, chips, weed, wash your windshield, will there be anything else, check your oil, perhaps some brown mescaline, or harsh... clean your headlights, or maybe some windowpane? Be sure to tell your friends about me! Y'all come back, now.”

Every week, I'd tell myself that I wasn't going to sell to him any more. But then every week, he'd outperform all my other dealers, and my greed would override my better judgement. In my estimation, he

was certain to get nailed by the cops, yet astonishingly he never did. His success was due to his energy, his ultra vigilant personality, and his exposure to large numbers of people at the gas station. Maybe he had relatives in local politics, or as mentioned, he was an excellent judge of character, or perhaps he was just immensely lucky. Who knows? At my advice, he kept a thermos half filled with gasoline, moonshine, and acetone, behind his sales counter. As was my case, he never had to use it.

Another minor precaution, I employed was to never use any particular time to approach my dealers. I'd show-up at unexpected times, and at different places: their favorite club, a friend's house, their place of work, one of their regular hangouts, the beach, etc. All of my dealers were intelligent, likable people, who worked jobs. Still, I never tried to be earnest friends with any of my dealers. Originally, Harold had advised me that it was better that they remain somewhat uncertain of me. He even suggested that I make them believe that I'd been to prison for assault and battery, or armed robbery, something where I'd shot someone, but I elected not to use those terror tactics. Harold had not used them on me. Maybe I should have, since it was going to be

one of my busted dealers, who would soon try to set me up to be arrested. Had I put the fear God in him, he might have been hesitant to turn me in.

The day it happened, heat and fatigue were causing my mind to slip. Inarguably, there was a subconscious thing at work... I was morally corrupt, and about to kick my own conscious ass... hard, right between the eyes! I was driving down DeHeller Street, considered by many folks to be ground zero for drug sales in Mobile's ghetto district, located in the very center of my newspaper district. Imprudently, I was about to violate two of my cardinal rules for drug dealing, but they each overlapped the other: only sell to my dealers, and the rule I passed on to my dealers... never let the buyer select you.

Maybe it was the blinding hot sun and the oppressive thick brine-laden humidity, combined with the fact that I was boned tired and severely dehydrated, feeling like I'd given up ten pounds of perspiration that morning. Moreover, I was hungry and may have been hypoglycemic. I'd been working since three a.m., and hadn't slept well the night before. Perhaps too, my downfall was owing to my tendency to be over confident. After all, I had been

dealing drugs daily for nearly two years, without a legal hiccup. Hence my below ground mason jars were stuffed with green; I had no idea how much, but it was far more than I needed.

I was about to overlook a series of obvious warnings, that I was soon to be accosted by a very determined group of police officers. That scorching hot morning, it was almost as if I was trying to get arrested, or that I was suffering from premature senile psychosis, at the ripe old age of twenty-five, and though it was more than forty years ago, recalling that fateful day I still experience a small stab of fear, a memory, which refuses to be resolved. Under normal conditions, my mind tends to function fairly well and even for extended periods; yet every now and then, especially with a certain amount of exhaustion, my brain squirts-out some monumental blunders. These have kept me from ever thinking I could ever fully relax. At times, I've wondered if my mind didn't create the faux pas to mitigate the boredom of life.

Make no mistake, fear vanquishes tedium.

Time to Think, by Arturo Wilfredo

Mortly

Most likely many of my life's most distressing predicaments have been 'inadvertently' generated, just so I can experience, the flow of adrenaline, be the experience pleasant or unpleasant. Remember, win or lose, either way, the gambler gets his precious adrenaline high, and expunges his boredom. If he loses a lot of money, he pumps adrenaline. If he wins a lot of money, he pumps adrenaline. In other words, the money is only the secondary aspect of gambling. In fact, the money is comparatively insignificant. The main driving facet of that addiction is the endogenous chemical high, and it may be far more than only adrenaline. Yet another hormone released by stress is beta-endorphin, far more powerful than morphine. For that biochemical to be released in the body generally requires an 'immense' stress; perhaps, for the gambler it might be the equivalent of losing or winning his life's savings. Both good and bad situations can generate the release of adrenaline and beta-endorphin; in that way, evil or good, gain or loss, fear or happiness, success or failure, are in that respect quite similar in their biochemistry. Only the person's ego cares about the difference. All those things, even if they're opposites, as far as the

conscious mind is concerned, are anything but boring, and each of those conditions are nothing more than a select group of neurons firing in their particular way, while the sympathetic nervous system stimulates the old adrenal medulla, milking its chromaffin cells, for every last precious molecule of the clear liquid adrenaline, while the pituitary gland at the base of the brain releases beta-endorphin into the bloodstream. Perchance, those molecules are considered by many, to be the very essence of life, or at least, their purpose for living.

Driving in my exhausted mental fog, I was only a few minutes from experiencing a deluge of those chemicals. Turning the steering wheel, I rounded the corner from *DeHeller*, to head west on *Velmont Street*, and that's when I spotted a stranger. He was propped with his back up against the brick wall. As it turned-out he was someone I definitely should have ignored, for he was about to dramatically alter my life in a most disagreeable fashion. The man was medium height, a reddish-brown African American, with a lean lanky frame, and a reedy ribcage, sporting the classic white wife-beater. He wore short nappy hair, big dark aviator sunglasses, and appeared to be in his mid-twenties. That unfamiliar gentleman was dressed

in brand new jeans, held-up by a rattlesnake skin belt, adorned with a huge silver cowboy rodeo buckle. *No black guy in Mobile wears a rattlesnake belt with a rodeo buckle.* He was standing on an uneven cracked piece of sidewalk, leaning with his shoulder-blades pressed up against the brick wall of *Idel's*, a local black nightclub, where there was always a plethora of action, both legal and otherwise. So much felonious activity occurred in that area, that in order to avoid the notice of the local drug squad, I never did business near the club, at least not until that day.

Back then, there weren't many black cowboys in the deep South, certainly none that I'd heard of. There were a few out west, and in other rural parts of the South, but that guy was anything but a cowboy. Alabama now has a plethora of black rodeo stars. It's only because certain of my family members are into rodeo, that I know of Willie 'Bill' Pickett. He was one of the first black rodeo stars, still he wasn't from Mobile. His home was Texas. Mr. Pickett married a former slave, who was the daughter of a plantation owner. The skinny young man on the corner that day, obviously lacked the muscle, which being a cowboy requires. Moreover, the unknown bony fellow wasn't wearing boots. Instead, he wore a pair

of cheap dirty white tennis shoes.

He'd evidently heard my car engine and tires, rounding the corner, since his narrow chiseled face stopped gazing down at his grungy white tennis shoes, swiveled left, and looked-up my way. The large dark sunglasses made it hard to tell when his eyes had actually locked onto me. But this guy, whom I didn't know from Adam, suddenly seemed to recognize me. *Does he know me?* The first clue was the emergence of a lopsided grin composed of ultra white teeth, behind his retracting lips. Simultaneously his right shoe kicked-upward and outward, as the back of his left arm pushed his lightweight frame, away from the brick wall on which he'd been propped.

Quickly, he stepped out toward the curb, while his open right hand swung out, wastefully flicking away a freshly lit cigarette; then, the long fingers splayed-out with their palm facing me, signaling me with a wave, securing my undivided, yet completely exhausted, attention. His open palm was a request for me to stop. Shades then stood at the curb, smiling and plainly nodding, as if he knew me. *Do I know him?* I was so weary, I assumed that maybe I just didn't recognize him, due to the shades he wore.

Patently, I should have kept right-on driving, but while the power was on, my mainframe had apparently blown a fuse, and I was about to miss a collector's series of warning clues. Keeping track of my paperboys and dealers, as well as a lack of sleep, had frazzled my cognition.

Letting-up on the accelerator and applying some brake, I doltishly pulled over to the curb, wondering who the guy wearing the shades was, thereby playing into Shades' treacherous facade. I figured that whatever the reason this guy wanted to talk, had to be important, because he'd just wasted a perfectly good smoke to get my attention. Then Shades exhaled the smoke, and looked around, as if to see if anyone was watching... all these warning clues I missed, and there would be more missed clues soon to follow, but as mentioned, I was operating in a stupor.

Shades seemed to be alone, except for the one unremarkable black fellow standing by a wall mounted pay-phone, closer to the corner, who didn't seem to notice me, or Shades. Pulling to the curb, I stopped the car, ergo Shades thrust his small nappy head, inside my passenger window, presenting me with a forced and fast fading grin, then he

conspiratorially spoke-up.

“Listen man, Black (the name of one of my dealers, who was near jet black) said I could score sum orange micro and maybe sum speed, from you. What ya say, man? You good wid dat, man?”

Dog tired, I let him hang for a slow three count, just blankly starring at his unnatural grin, till it fully disappeared, transforming into a telltale sneer, yet another clue I missed. *There's no happiness in this guy; maybe that's why he wants the speed.* Looking back, it's so easy to see, that I was beyond brain-dead, and might as well have driven to the police station, handed them the thousand orange microdots that were in my car's ashtray, fought my way into a jail cell, locked the door, and flushed the key down the toilet. *Maybe even though Shades can't smile, when he's dead, the mortician could use some super glue to give him a permanent smile, so his friends and family will think that he had made it through the pearly gates.*

For me, absurd thoughts sometimes accompany exhaustion, and that's okay. There's nothing quite like not realizing the origins of your own thoughts. Shade's comment, about Black, momentarily shocked me, since it meant that Black, one of my dealers, had evidentially commented the grave error of giving me

up, as being his drug supplier. With each dealer I recruited, I would give them a list of dos and don'ts, and giving me up was certainly a huge don't. When I'd first recruited Black, I drilled him with the fact that he was to never, never, never mention anything about me to anyone! 'As far as you know, I don't even exist! We don't know each other. Got that, Black?'

"Yeah man, it's cool. Understand, man."

The mere fact that Shades evoked Black's name should have told me that Black had been busted, and that Shades was seriously dangerous, which should have made me drive away, rather than allowing him to continue with his charade. But, my thoroughly muddled mind only made a note to talk to Black, about not discussing me with others. For Shades to have recognized me, meant that at some point, Black had pointed me out. At that moment, I was setting myself-up for a major adrenaline pumper, and a lengthy prison stay! The current state of American prisons offer profit to the private prisons, the businesses which provide support services to the prison: low quality food, inferior medicine, heating-air-ventilation services, cleaning companies, etc., Often the staff, who work in prisons are ridiculously

trained, mentally slow, and cruel. The huge corporations which employ the inmates for menial labor with exceptionally low pay, make-out like bandits. Prisons only pretend to be effective against crime, to fool America's general populace, since it seems to offer revenge, and so there continues this stupid endless cycle of expanding crime. What we may need to be doing is reducing: huge corporate and political greed, the overproduction and distribution/prescription of addictive drugs, changing how addicts are treated by the legal system, reducing homelessness, unemployment (jobs that offer a wage a person can actually live on, without living like a slave), ending poverty, teaching about racism (both white and black, as well as in both the civilian and the police worlds) in schools, etc. And we need equal punishment for the rich, who are found guilty of felonies, not just a fine to be paid by a significant fraction of corporate profits, as if the guilty corporate officer is actually innocent and the inanimate entity called, 'the company' is at fault. Prisons today are designed to beat down and destroy humanity. Ever wonder why prisons allow/encourage prisoners to build raw power in the form of powerlifting? Why don't they encourage yoga, exercise, jogging, etc. When a guy gets out of prison, who do you think is

more likely to commit a strong-arm crime, the ferociously muscular weightlifter, or the yoga master, the regular jogger, or the exercise fanatic? And don't forget that powerlifting not only increases the size of muscles, but also the size of the adrenal glands!

Still not thinking clearly and feeling overconfident, I truthfully responded, "No speed, but I've got some orange micro. How many you look'n to buy, my good man?"

"Where's the break? (Price break for buying a certain larger number.)" He bargained with me.

"No break for a new guy. I've got to know you for a while." I foolishly countered. *I shouldn't be talking with this guy.*

"Ya got three hundred?" He asked.

"Sure do, old man." I told Shades, who was in his twenties.

Stuffed in my car's ashtray were one thousand hits, of orange micro, wrapped-up in a single piece of cellophane. It would only take a few minutes to unload them on Shades, and make a few bucks.

"Yeah, come-on and get-in, Shades." I said with a smile, looking hard at his big very dark sunglasses; it

was impossible to see his eyes.

He accepted the moniker, with a nod, but only gave me the briefest sneering smile. *I'd like him better, without the fake smile.*

“It’s six hundred bucks; two bucks a hit. You got the green?”

“You sure there ain’t no discount for three hundred?” He asked.

“The break is a thousand, man. Then, they’re a buck seventy-five, no break for anything less. You want that many... \$1750?”

“Three hundred hits are fine... \$600.” He responded.

“You got the bread on you?” I asked, again.

He then flashed the end of a small but adequate roll of fifties in the left front pocket of his jeans.

“Let’s do this thing.” He said, climbing in and closing the car door.

That’s when I again noticed his big gleaming silver rodeo buckle, and saw that it had a small brass or gold relief of a cowboy riding a bucking bull. I could make out the word ‘champion’ on it, and so I assumed that the buckle was probably a trophy of

sorts. I figured that perhaps some cowboy had a drug habit and used the buckle as collateral, or that Shades stole it from somewhere. Lots of bronc and bull riders are hooked on pain pills. Shades definitely looked like he'd been around the cellblock. Years later, I got into skydiving and made well over four hundred jumps, but could never imagine myself having the courage to climb onto the back of an angry massive rodeo bull. Shades didn't have the muscle to be an inmate or a bull-rider. How weird... a black guy wearing some redneck's belt buckle.

Looking at the shiny silver belt buckle, I thought about riding a bull... *it has to be like riding the devil*. Even the world's best bull riders, eventually get killed or severely injured, and only the very best earn enough money to make it worth the risk of crippling injuries, not to mention the pain of the corresponding surgeries. Of course, bull riders are probably not in it for the dollars, as much as for the adrenaline and beta-endorphin. Win or lose, injured or uninjured the bull rider gets the juice. Adrenaline is surely addicting, just ask any drug dealer... the fear of arrest, or making big cash; either way, it's a little glandular squirt of clear sparkling intensity.

Years later, I heard about a report that the

National Institute of Drug Abuse published. The report claimed that tobacco is the most addicting drug, and crack cocaine was number two, but they failed to consider the associated adrenaline in their study. I'll bet that if you told a cigarette smoker or a crack addict that the only way, that they'd could get their respective addictive substances, would be to strap themselves onto, and ride, a massive violent bucking bull for eight-seconds, they might just flat-out give-up their chemical addiction. Now there's an interesting study for some scientific group. Bring forth the addict, show them the free drugs, show them the hulking mean beast, and say, 'the choice is your's, and we pay all medical bills, or funeral expenses.' While that may seem like inverse logic, it makes some amount of practical sense. If that weird thinking holds true, the adrenaline/beta-endorphin high may be the high of all highs, but then maybe not, since each three pounds of grey goop is different. For me, adrenaline was amazing, on the other hand, methamphetamine was mythically inspiring, forcing one to deeply consider things. I didn't do the latter so I could feel good. Methamphetamine was something which lays-out a cognitive feast. Still, knowing what I now know about the drug, I was a fool to have used it the few

times I did, but mere luck was on my side; my brain still has enough dopamine, so I don't craving the drug, or feel like shit without it.

Letting out the clutch, Shades and I headed west on *Velmont Street*. Then, the problem was to find a place to count-out the three hundred hits of orange microdot. Counting-out three hundred bb-sized orange pills in the car, where a cop could drive by at any second, and there I'd be, sitting with Shades, a questionable looking black dude, who almost certainly was the proud owner of a lengthy felony record, and known to the cops, would be like the kiss of death, like chumming for sharks while swimming. Sure, I was judging him on his race and looks alone, but at times that's fairly accurate, and I should have judged him even more strongly than I did. Yes, dear reader, often you can judge a book by its' cover. Counting-out the hits with Shades in the car was foolish, and I might as well have put a sign in the car window that said, 'Drug deal going down, here! Police welcome.' Since I normally only dealt with my dealers, I'd never had this problem of finding a place to count the hits.

"I'm not doing this deal sitting here in the car, with you, Shades. In fact, it's probably dangerous just

to be seen riding with you. While those sunglasses are cool looking, they make you look suspicious, and my long hair doesn't help the situation, either. Cops see us, a black and a white together, they'll correctly assume we've got drugs, and we'll be busted. Let's get off the street. Where can we go to count-out the three hundred hits, and the cops won't drive-by?" Foolishly, I asked the unknown young ebony gentleman, and played right into his hands.

His reply was lightning quick. Still brain dead, I was missing clues, right and left, risking everything to make a few extra dollars profit, but maybe it was for one more giant pump of adrenaline, the likes of which I'd never before known... the threat of prison!

"Two blocks up... There's an empty old fucked-up shack over on the left side of the road." Shades suggested pointing at a dilapidated old shotgun house, just up the street. *I don't guess it'll collapse, if we go in.*

"Cool!" I stupidly answered.

As mentioned, perchance I was trying to get caught. That way, I could wring-out my adrenal glands of every single scintillating micro-drop of adrenaline. Glancing in the rearview mirror, I

noticed the other black guy, who had been standing only a few feet from Shades, was lifting the receiver on the pay-phone. This was yet another rather obvious clue missed. At the time, I didn't think too much about it. My brain had gone the way of Elvis, it had left the building, and was headed for the heartbreak hotel, with bars on every window!

Shades had extended a long index finger with a slightly bulbous tip, adorned with a poorly manicured nail, which unnaturally curved down over the finger's tip. It was an odd fingernail, since it curved so dramatically and was naturally darker in color. The finger pointed toward a tiny, abandoned, ramshackle wooden shotgun house, roughly the size and shape of a two bedroom one bathroom trailer. The finger then moved to point at the edge of cracked powdery asphalt road immediately in front of my car.

"You can park here." Shades suggested pointing at a section of curb.

Moronically, I pulled to the side and parked where the bulbous fingertip was indicating, directly across the street from the God forsaken wooden chantey. Years of being exposed to the blistering sun and tropical winds had scoured the paint from the

wooden exterior walls, leaving the boards with something of a shiny satiny iron-gray surface. Two of the horizontal boards along the front, were bowed-out and detached on one end, revealing the pieces of bleached-out dog-eared tarpaper underneath. A good quarter of the roof's faded green shingles had been blown away, revealing more curled-up ragged black tarpaper. Several of the remaining singles were soon to be lost to the next gale, having already rotated to various odd angles, barely attached by their last remaining rusty roofing tack. Parts of the slightly elevated wooden porch sagged badly. *This place is only good for bulldozing, but it suits our purposes.* Grabbing my keys out of the ignition, and the cellophane wrapped bundle of orange microdot out the ashtray, Shades and I gently closed the car doors, so as to not attract unwanted attention.

Purposely, I didn't lock the car, since there was nothing worth stealing, just my rusty hand-trowel, a secondhand backpack in the trunk, a spare tire, a lug wrench, and a half empty can of blended solvents, under the front seat. Had I left the car locked in that high-crime neighborhood, someone might have assumed it contained something worth breaking-out a car window. My new nefarious friend led the way,

across the street. Before entering the shotgun shack, I glanced around the neighborhood, and everything appeared still and copacetic... no cop cars, no barking dogs, and no nosey neighbors peering out their windows. *This is an ideal spot.* Shades held the front door open for me. *This'll be a snap!* But, the opposite was about to prove to be the case.

The living room came furnished with two pieces of worthless furniture, not fit to sell at the Mobile flea-market. The filthy couch had a worn and scratched-up wooden frame complete with cushions covered in hard and brittle cracked and ripped pink vinyl, with hunks of yellowed aged foam-rubber padding, pushing its' way up through a few of the larger cracks. The second piece of furniture was a rickety little poorly varnished wooden table, standing by the door on four thin spindly spool legs. The table appeared homemade, with the legs too long and thin, for something turned-out in a factory. My weary mind continued focusing on things, which were not pertinent to getting the job done, and in the process, I realized I was wasting time.

The curtains were only doubled-over tatty yellowed sheer sheets qualified. They'd merely been laid over rusting white old fashioned telescoping

curtain rods. Oddly, the sheets were clipped in place with what appeared to be brand new wooden, spring loaded, clothespins, yet another clue, noted but ignored. The place smelled heavily of mold, but also with the unmistakable aromas of fresh coffee, and recent cigarette smoke. My failing brain, wrongly chalked-up the cigarette smell to the fact that Shades was smoking, when I picked him up at the corner, and I erroneously assumed that perhaps he'd been drinking coffee, before he gotten to *Idel's*, totally overlooking the fact that he hadn't smelled like coffee, while he was in my car.

Furthermore, in the tiny living room, there wasn't the usual voluminous amount of trash, which you'd normally find in an abandoned house. The only items, besides the two pieces of furniture, were a neatly folded-up newspaper, and an open, but empty, doughnut box, with a nickel-sized ovoid thick red gelatinous blob stuck to the white paper inside, probably made by a leaky raspberry-filled doughnut, which happened to be my favorite, at least back then. As yet, no insects had found their way to the sugary red blob; all these were missed clues.

Both the two items were lying on the stained, threadbare, and frayed piece of drab olive green

carpeting. The folded newspaper happened to be the one which my paperboys had been delivering that morning. Then suddenly a fat bluebottle fly momentarily lit on the sticky red jelly, but only for a second, then it flicked its wings, and flew off, loudly buzzing passed my head with some undecipherable buzzing, before it headed down the narrow dark hallway, leading toward the back of the house. Looking down the hall, I saw the huge fly tapping its' body against a window pane. *Maybe the red filling is actually poisonous, since the fly rejected it.* During this time, Shades just stood, without saying a word.

“Does someone live here?” I asked Shades, who’d seen me eyeing the dump.

“No, man! Ain’t nobody living here.” He answered, shrugging his narrow shoulders, but not making eye contact, only grimacing, showing his teeth and gazing around the depressing little room.

The recent newspaper and the new doughnut box seemed out of place, but the idea that cops loved cigarettes, coffee, and doughnuts, and that vagrants aren’t likely to clean a place, buy a morning paper, much less leave it neatly folded after reading it, never crossed my fatigued brain, nor did I think about the fact that the closest doughnut shop was

more than two miles away, and that vagrants didn't usually have cars. Instead, I thought how much I could use a doughnut and a cup of coffee. My brain had taken the last train to the coast and derailed, right off the side of the Kinsol trestle.

Carefully untwisting the cellophane packet of orange microdots, I made use of the top of the spindly legged wooden table, to count-out the hits. The count had reached 242, when my peripheral vision picked-up a white flash, briefly shining through the worn-out yellowed sheets, covering the window, which faced the street. Though I'd missed a truckload of clues, still they'd left me with a worrisome discomfort. Suddenly, there was a bright flash of white light, coming through the curtail-sheets, causing me to experience a marked sinking feeling, and the adrenaline began to trickle forth.

For a second after the flash, I froze and just listened, but heard nothing, then there was a tiny but notable 'click.' *That a car door gently closing.* Then, I barely heard a man gently clear his throat, so I walked toward the curtain the flash had come through, to see what had produced the bright white flicker, the 'click' of the car door, and the mild masculine throat clearing. As I moved toward the

front window, Shades loudly and theatrically spoke-up.

“Hey man, what you do’n? Don’t stop count’n em. You’re on two hundred and forty-two. Keep count’n, man! We need to finish-up, so we can get the fuck outta here, man! Come on back, and let’s get this done! Don’t stop count’n!” Shades urgently begged, while flicking his bulbous fingertip at the microdots, still sitting in two piles on the table top, the smaller pile on the wood, and the larger pile still laying in the opened piece of cellophane.

Shades acting was too quick, too adamant, in how he’d bawled-out those words. His panicky instructions only served to alarm me, causing me to hasten to the front window. My precautionary mind had finally begun to sputter back to life, and the adrenaline was flowing into general circulation. Peeking around the edge of the filthy curtain, using only my left eye, and without moving the edge of the curtain, I received the foulest jolt of my young life, paralyzing me for a good two-second count, causing a massive amount of adrenaline to gush-forth!

There were five law enforcement vehicles, four white city police cruisers, as well as an unmarked black Ford sedan, parked on the street roughly one

hundred feet, down from the house I was in! The bright white flash in the window had plainly been the sun reflecting off the side and windows of the last of the white cop cars to arrive... a small starburst of warning. Six cops, with weapons drawn (four with pistols and two with short pump twelve gauges), were solemnly striding up the sidewalk. The two shotguns were held at port arms, and the pistols were pointed down, and held by their thighs. *Holy Shit, this is a bad fucking day!* One cop, probably a detective, was in a two piece gray suit, the other in standard uniforms; none were talking. They looked overly solemn, whereas the one in the suit looked loose, relaxed, and moved fluidly.

To me, the police looked as if they were my pallbearers, and there I was, already in a dilapidated wooden casket of sorts. They were coming to hammer in the nails, drop me in a hole, and shovel in the dirt. Every neuron in my weary neurology came to full alert! My adrenal glands were releasing a virtual tidal wave of clear sparkling adrenaline!

The police would need no warrant in that scary situation; they were going to march right in; after all, it wasn't my house. It was time to move, and move fast. The old house was apparently a police 'trap

house.' *I've got to get the fuck out of the backdoor, now!*

Quickly I spun, and with the side of my hand, swept the 242 orange microdots, back into the cellophane with the rest. Grandpa had taught me about the importance of evidence in court. Shades just stood there and watched. He now knew I fully understood his betrayal. Realizing that Shades had opened and closed the front door, I knew I'd left no prints there, perchance only on the table top. So after I'd hurriedly twisted the cellophane closed and crammed the pills back into my right front jeans pocket, I then put my right hand on the inside of the front of my sweaty t-shirt, leaned forward and quickly wiped-off the table, then without even looking at the traitorous Shades, I sprinted down the narrow dark hallway, headed for the backdoor, to make good my escape.

Through all of this, my backstabbing buddy, Shades, just repeatedly yelled, "Don't go, man! Don't run! Stop!" I'd later learn that Shades had been nicknamed, 'Rocketman,' by the local drug community. But his unfocused expressions and mechanical voice clearly lacked conviction; moreover, his face was turned not toward me, but toward the front window, facing the street. Shades

was voicing his stilted commands, so that the cops would better heard him, putting on a show for them. After all, they were his puppet masters. His commands were never really intended for me. Shades simply wanted those cops to hear his pleas, so they'd know that he was playing his humiliating part, as they'd ordered; doing his level best to appear to be serving me up on a platter. He was behaving, like the recently busted, dutiful confidential informant, he had become. *Fuck that lying asshole! I'm outta here!*

On the other hand, when I'd been looking out the front window at the oncoming cops, Shades had made no effort to try to detain me, nor had he tried to scatter the microdots, which he could have easily done, while I was looking out the window. In all likelihood, it had been just a few days prior, that Shades had been arrested, perchance in that very same dilapidated trap house, I was then trying to get out of. So now, the double-crossing Shades was a slave to those six armed white men, about to come rudely calling. In effect, Shades was their bonded servant, but wearing a rodeo champion's belt buckle. In those days, confidential informants, who'd been arrested, could be kept in the employ of the police for years.

A cop might tell the arrested individual that they'd only have to do the police a few favors, but that was generally a lie. The cops' perspective was that once a person was a criminal, they're always a criminal, and their's for the using. In a fairly direct manner, they made sure of that. The poor person usually couldn't afford a good attorney, and public defenders would only help a person, if charges had been filed. The police would contact the State Attorney and the prosecution would be placed on hold, no charges filed, pending the cooperation of the arrested party. Poor folks would be kept on the police lease, for as long as ten years, for a third degree felony! Often times, the informant was so uneducated, that they never asked for any verification that the State Attorney's Office was involved. Once a confidential informant (CI) was finally off the hook, cops would persuade some other CI, to get the penniless and desperate original CI to comment another crime, so they'd be back on the leash, again. Sometimes, it would be as simple as the other CI selling them a stolen item, for a couple of bucks, or just a small bag of weed.

Running down the hallway, I passed a bath and a bedroom, upon reaching the backdoor, I was

standing in a stuffy dirty little kitchen, which probably hadn't cooked anything for twenty years. There I faced a second monstrous shock, with yet another rush of adrenaline. A piece of rusty steel rebar had been crudely affixed across the back door, which only opened inward. The four foot piece of rebar was fastened to the door frame by a multitude of large rusty nails, hammered into the wooden door frame, then firmly bent over and onto the ends of the steel bar. To add insult to injury, a macabre touch to this primitive improvised barrier, was a few yards of rusty galvanized barb-wire had been wrapped and twisted around the rudimentary rebar lock. There was no way I was going to get through that door! *This is some cop's idea of a sick joke, and they're about to come in the front door!* At that moment, I felt the icy fingers of panic trying to immobilize my thoughts. I was barely able to shove the fear aside. *I can't stop moving!* At that moment, I was entering into uncharted emotional territory. No doubt, the crudely constructed rusty rebar-barbwire barrier had been designed to demoralize me, and it briefly worked! Some cops possess a weird sadistic sense of humor, but I wasn't laughing. To this day, I'm still not. That unpleasant memory is forever branded in my old brain. While writing this hodgepodge, I can still feel

the sickening dread, I'd felt over forty years ago, upon seeing that homespun rusty contraption, baring my escape. I turned to look at the only window in the kitchen, but unfortunately it was not the kind of window which opened. It was a fixed window made of nine rectangular glass panes, held in place by thin wooden batons, that were about as thick a big first grade pencil. It was the kind of window commonly used in the 1930s and 40s. The window had been installed there, just so that the person standing in front of the kitchen sink, washing their dishes, could gaze out upon the backyard.

I didn't have the seconds to indulge the corresponding panic, nipping hard at my heels, so I headed back up the hallway. As I passed the bedroom and then the bathroom, I saw that their windows had been nailed shut, using the same type of large nails which had been used on the rebar. Having nowhere to go, I just kept going back up the hallway, toward Shades and the six arriving narco cops. *Why am I running back toward my enemies?* The answer to my question was that there wasn't any other place to go, and though it seemed hopeless, I wasn't ready to give-up. I was moving just to be moving, and hoping for a miraculous solution, but

with the six cops about to walk through the front door, there appeared to be no hope of escape.

Blindly, I continued up the short twenty foot hallway, almost to the aforementioned living room; then I stopped. *Is this the end?* There stood Shades forlornly staring at me, with a guilty look on his face. Hatefully, I glared back at him. Reaching into my grab-bag of solutions, I found it empty. Then suddenly my heart stopped, as I heard the unhappy thumps and creaks, of the policemen's heavy steps, stressing the sagging boards on the small front porch. There seemed to be an inordinate space of time between their steps. *I'm so screwed!*

Then came that strange little stress-induced temporal distortion, I'd encountered only a handful of times, where time bogs-down, probably owing to my full measure of adrenaline, every horrifying drop of the exhilarating holy hormone. Next, I heard a small metal 'clink,' as a cop's hand grimly clutched the wobbly ancient hollow metal door knob. Shades in the living room, and I still in the hallway, both stared at the doorknob, and watched it slowly turn. *They're coming in! Holy shit!* At that instant, I knew my time was up; my life's sweet freedom had come to an end!

Stupefied, I stood there completely out of options, as the door slowly started to open. Simultaneous with my resigning myself to my fate, a small life-saving epiphany, complete in every detail, was instantly born, as if it were a gift from God! Spinning away from the opening front door, I sprinted for all I was worth, back down the dark narrow hallway. All I could see was the light, coming through the fragile window, above the little kitchen sink. *Time to go for broke.*

Since the cops were armed, I realized that the next few seconds carried only four options: death (Each cop carried a gun.), being severely wounded, years in prison, or total sweet freedom. With that realization, I suddenly felt amazingly clear headed, and wildly alive. *No time for hesitation...* One of my country cousins likes to say, “He, who hesitates, is lost.” He’s the one, who used to ride rodeo bulls, and probably deserved the buckle, which Shades was wearing. My cousin rode his first bull by lying and claiming he was twenty-one, when in fact he was only sixteen. You didn’t have to show an ID card in those days. In the country, men were taken at their word.

Metaphorically, the ‘trap house’ situation was

something of a bull ride for me. While I was no champion athlete, ever since wrestling in military school, I have been fairly athletic and worked out, daily. Now at sixty-five, I still work out nearly every day. But in the trap house at the age of twenty-five, my reflexes were blindingly fast. When I pivoted and began my sprint, back down the short hallway, I put on a burst of speed the likes of which I'd never known. *This is for all the chips!*

In my mind's eye, I had already seen myself doing what I was about to attempt, so in a way, I knew I was home free, all reservation and fatigue had fled my mind, and I had become the embodiment of my revelation. From the moment I began the sprint, it was a no-think performance. Flying across the threshold of the small kitchen, and about eight feet shy of the window, I vaulted upward, directly toward the nine ancient rectangular glass panes, just above the sink. The old plywood kitchen floor spanning between the ancient joists, flexed and gave me a little spring-board action, as my feet came up off the floor. I'd aimed for the center of the nine glass panes. At the beginning of the vault, I could see the sandy backyard clearly, as well as the six foot tall wooden fence, about sixty feet from the

back of the house. The bottom of the window appeared to be about seven feet above the ground.

Once airborne, I tucked my chin, balled-up, wrapped my arms around my shins, and buried my face between my knees, while commencing a forward summersault. Passing over the dingy kitchen sink, I was almost perfectly upside down, and had begun to outpace my fears. Traveling through the air, my lower back and heels made contact with the fragile window. Smashing through the delicately thin windowpanes and their flimsy wooden framing, and they offered practically no resistance. I suddenly emerged out into the sunlight, well above the ground.

To avoid injury, I had remained balled-up, and continued the forward roll, but as I headed down toward the ground, I released my knees to opened-up, luckily hitting the ground on my feet. After only a brief unsteady wobble, and minor course correction, I continued sprinting full-speed toward the rear six foot fence. There was nothing in the backyard, but an old 55 gallon burn barrel. There was no time to assess myself for injury, from breaking through the glass. Twenty feet shy of the back fence, I heard the policeman shout.

“What the fuck!”

The noise of breaking glass hadn't gone unnoticed. At nearly the same instant, I heard another policeman, who evidently had come down the side of the house shout.

“Police! Stop, or I'll shoot.”

Never considering slowing down, nor turning to look, I realized this situation was all or nothing. The odds were that he had a pistol, instead of one of the two shotguns, which I'd seen them holding out on sidewalk. I prayed it was a pistol, but never considered stopping. I was too afraid to change my plan. I was locked-in on the plan, and going for all the marbles.

“Don't shoot! I'm a cop!” I deceitfully yelled back, always quick with a useful lie.

It was a cheesy bluff, but it might have been confusing enough to delay the policeman's itchy trigger finger one or two-seconds, and that's all I needed. No cop wants to be known for killing a fellow officer. To this day, I don't know if my lie helped or not. Dad would have been proud of my bluff, apart from the minor fact that I was involved in committing a felony. All I needed was a moment

to reach the top of, and vault over, the backyard fence.

Still, a half a second later, I made a small jog to the right, thinking that this maneuver might allow me to dodge a bullet or some portion of the shotgun's scatter; nevertheless, not a shot was fired. Then, placing my two hands on the top of backyard wooden fence, I leaped, and as my knees rose-up under my chin, I glided over the top of the six foot fence, as if it wasn't there. In those few seconds, all those years of working out, had suddenly paid off, in spades!

Once I was airborne and passing above the fence, I was scouting-out a decent landing spot on the other side, when I spied the proverbial big mean-looking dog. But while it looked hugely ferocious, it never so much as moved a muscle. It just laid there and watched me hit the ground, and sprint away. The furry canine didn't even bark. It was big and wrinkly. I recall thinking it was probably part bloodhound, so I thought of the movie, *Cool Hand Luke* (1967), and the pepper Luke had spread all over the ground to deter the pursuing bloodhounds from tracking him, and there I was, also running from the cops, trying to avoid prison. It was just a silly little coincidental

thought.

Then again, I do believe that all events are coincidental, but that we humans recognize only a few of the obvious ones, and the bigger the ego, the fewer the coincidences realized. Memories are positioned in the brain, temporally, spatially, and by so many other associations: color, emotion, rhythm, rhyme, chronology, personages, places, things, feelings, odors, textures, etc., so they must produce a flow of coincidences, but we, or should I say our egos, often fail to recognize the constant neurological associations. The same goes for the universe, it's all a matter of particles interacting by the laws of physics. The movement of one particle, influences the movement of all the others, and they all influence each other, as moments pass; and, what are those moments, but the movements of said particles? Each and every thought is nothing by atoms moving atoms. Ergo, nothing is random, or by choice. You can't argue with good physics, unless you're on the left side of the curve, and then, almost everything is up for grabs.

Sprinting down the side of another broken-down shotgun shanty, I then darted across a street, and plunged into the next block. It felt great to be out of

the trap house, and running. All my fatigue had vanished, and at that moment, I felt truly alive. That next city block was populated by more costly, middle class, homes. I'd gone from low to middle income, in just a few seconds. As I ran through the next yard, I could hear the cops, firing-up their engines and squealing their tires, up by the trap house. *They want me, and they're coming fast!* I figured there remained just enough time to charge through one more city block, and across the next street, before the cops would be on me, so I needed to quickly find some place to hide. *No telling how many cars they'll radio in to search for me!* The open streets and yards were where I'd be most visible, and so I was desperately looking for a safer place to hide. In a house would be the best place, except for the possible problem of people being inside. *Excuse me, may I hide, from the police, inside your house, just till they leave?* Vaulting over another tall wooden backyard fence, off to my right, I spied a house, which though smaller, was similar to my Grandparents' house, in that it was perched atop large thick brick columns. This house had bright white wooden lattice-work, enclosing the open area below the house. In addition, the home was surrounded with plenty of giant thick azalea bushes. The little white structure was only a couple

hundred feet away, with just two low chain-link fences in my way. Right then, I could hear the engines of the cop cars closing in. Making the necessary ninety degree course correction, I dashed through the backyards, clearing the two low fences, to get to the house. There was about a three foot space between the ground and the floor of the house, covered by the flimsy crisscrossed white wooden lattice-work. At one of the home's rear corner brick pedestals, I quickly ducked between two sprawling bushes, tugged the lattice-work away from the brick columns, with just enough space for me to scoot through. Before I ducked through, I stripped-off my shirt and threw it between two bushes against the neighboring house. The idea was that if the police used dogs, I wanted to give them something to smell, rather than myself. Not wasting any time, I then ducked through the gap in the latticework and under the white house. Quietly, I pulled the lattice back into place. Right afterward, I heard a cop drive past, talking on his radio.

“Send two units. He's got to be around here, somewhere...” *Crap!*

Fortuitously, no one had seen me going under the house, or if they had, they'd taken mercy on my

soul, and not phoned the police. No noise was coming from the house above me, still I remained as quiet as possible, assuming that people could be inside and just not walking around. For all I knew, someone could have just been resting on the couch, reading a book. Being seen under the house, from a passing car was nearly impossible, because of a broad set of concrete steps, descending from the front porch of the house. Judging from the number of times that I heard the cop cars driving by that early afternoon, I probably owe my freedom to those concealing concrete steps.

It was fairly dark under the house, and the earth was exceptionally dry, and so it was problematically dusty. It was not like the sandy soil under my grandparent's house, but it was more like a fine gray talcum powder. Using both hands, I slowly and quietly excavated a long sallow foxhole to lay in, just in case a cop got out of his car, and happened to look through the white lattice-work. *Half buried, I'll be a harder to see, and my smell won't be as noticeable to a dog.* With cupped hands, I dug slowly, to avoid raising dust, and to be as silent as possible, nonetheless the dust was unavoidably irritating to my throat, and so began my massive struggle not to

cough, still fearing that there were people in the house directly above.

The fine gray particles tickled my throat and forced me to fight the powerful impulse to cough. I put-up one hell of an effort to refrain from hacking. Years of dope smoking had taught me how to control coughing. If there was someone in the house above me, they'd have been sure to have heard me, if I coughed. Before climbing into my newly made grave, I crawled to an obscure spot under the southwest corner of the house, where the ground raised up to almost meet the floor of the house, and there I buried the cellophane packet of one thousand orange microdots. Next, I smoothed and sprinkled the dry dirt, so that it didn't look like something had been buried there. Lastly, I dug-up a few other bogus places, and laying on my side, I managed to pee a tiny bit on the dirt, incase the police brought dogs, to search for the drugs. I was praying that the police wouldn't come with dogs. *Wonder if dogs can smell LSD?* Never would I return to retrieve the one thousand hits of orange microdot. Quite possibly, the drugs still there. Occasionally, I drive by that house, but have no urge to go looking underneath it. Even now, forty years plus later, driving through that area

gives me the creeps. That house and the trap house stand as stark monuments of my stupidity, and my never ending shame.

Because of the slope of the ground beneath the house, my left side was most likely to be seen, should a cop begin to peer through the lattice-work. And so, lying in my dusty shallow trench, I partially buried my left side; first, pushing dirt over my feet and legs, then my left torso, left arm, and left shoulder. Last, I darkened all the rest of my exposed skin with the choking gray dust.

Laying on my back, I just stared at the boards of the wooden sub-flooring, while adrenaline caused my youthful heart to pound at a reckless rate, testifying to my fear against the underside of my sternum, while I unsuccessfully tried to slow my worried breathing. My breath was heavy with dust; my mind was again thick with fear; both the dust and the fear were choking me senseless. Mastering the cough reflex was a matter of monumental concentration, and was nearly proportionate to my massive fear of being caught.

For what seemed like roughly two hours, I could hear what I assumed were the police cars patrolling the surrounding streets. They could be identified by

their distinctive sound... larger, but well-muffled, and tuned engines. After the first hour under the house, the resident tenants came home. They parked on a small concrete pad next to the house. The couple got out, and entered a side door. I could hear their footsteps and their few words muffled conversation, coming through the floor just above me. Something about the woman wanting to go see her sister. Needing a plan, I tried to consider my situation, and what I should do next. But for quite some time, that proved impossible, for while I barely had the courage to suppress my fear, and escape the nightmarish trap house; now, my fear seemed to have returned exponentially. Try as I might, I couldn't think. Panic had taken complete command of my gray matter. Maybe, I was having some type of panic-attack.

“Holy shit, my car’s parked in front that horrible place. I’m sweating like a madman. I’m itching everywhere. I need to cough! Don’t cough! At least, I didn’t get hurt going through the window. When will the cops stop driving around? God, I hope the cops don’t walk the neighborhood with their dogs. Don’t cough! Are they going to start looking under the houses? I need to cough! I need to make a plan! What the fuck am I going

to do? I need to calm down! Don't cough. That couple will hear me, if I cough. My car is parked in front of the trap house. What am I going to do? I need to think. I need to cough. Don't cough. Calm down! I hope the cops aren't going to use dogs. If they use dogs, I'm so fucked! I need a plan. I can't think. I need to calm down! If only my car wasn't parked there!..."

Under that house, I had become a worthless stinking pile of miasma, created by sweat, adrenaline, and irrepressible fear. In the trap house and running through the blocks, I'd somehow managed to suppress it, but laying under the couple's little house, my brain became utterly useless, and couldn't bring the slightest amount of concentration to bare upon solving my dilemma, for even if I managed to get away from under the house, there was still the problem of my car being parked dead in front of the trap house. Uselessly, I kept wallowing in my stupid fear. For a long time, fear was all I knew. To say the least, that fear soaked time, beneath the white house, was humiliating. To calm myself, I took to watching a small shadow created by a twig of an azalea bush on the neighboring house. The house was covered in sections of asbestos siding. As the sun moved across the sky, so moved the twigs shadow in

the asbestos. I watched it move about two inches and assumed that an hour had passed.

A few years before that fateful day under that house, I'd read Frank Herbert's famous sci-fi book *Dune*. It had mentioned something to the effect that "...fear is the little mind death..." Albeit temporary, my thinking mind had indeed died. The phenomenon of courage is a multifaceted beast. There's an almond sized structure in the brain called the amygdala, actually the human brain has two of them, one just inside the tip of each temporal lobe. Each amygdala (Latin for almond) is divided into three principle groups of nuclei, which in turn are divided into various smaller groups of nerve cells, each group or nucleus is usually named by location (central, basolateral, medial ventral, medial dorsal, etc.), and each plays a role in some particular emotion, or in some aspect of short-term memory. But one of those nuclei, the central nucleus, may be the principle generator of, and the very essence of, fear... terror, alarm, dread, horror, trepidation, panic, etc. Whatever you choose to call it, in truth, the central nucleus of the amygdala appears to be the embodiment of those words. Stimulate it in an animal or in a human, and they become terrified,

filled with dread, etc., and so they may seem cowardly, and less than courageous.

In one person, said fear-generating nucleus may be comparatively large, yet in another person, it may be hardly detectable. Hence, some people have a natural abundance of fear, and so they may be more likely to appear spineless, afraid to even leave the house, while those people without much of a central nucleus in their amygdala may have little or no fear to overcome and therefore be more apt to appear brave. This is not to say that there aren't also neurons, which can inhibit fear, by releasing an inhibiting neurotransmitter on the central nucleus, thereby keeping the cells from firing. The cells which inhibit the central nucleus appear to be the intercalated ITC cells of the amygdala. But, even these inhibitory ITC neurons may also be plentiful in number, or they may be few, with the numbers being determined from birth. So, while we can, to some degree, develop courage, by learning to use said ITC inhibitory neurons, to a very large extent, fear is still somewhat, if not largely, a hard-wired deal from birth. Therefore, for some people courage is a natural gift, whereas for others it is a learned art, and still for others, it may be virtually nonexistent, no matter

how hard they try to overcome their fears. For those in the latter group, their life may at times be filled with undeserved shame. People can be vastly different in so many ways. The older I get, the more obvious this simple fact becomes... just how different we all are, and how quick some people are to judge others based solely on their own neurology... most people are so short-sighted in that respect. Far too often, I've been fooled by this.

How well I recall my Dad telling me that some pilots would occasionally bank-off early, perhaps lacking the wherewithal to fly into the wall of anti-aircraft fire, being laid-out by the picket ships. Picket ships were covered with an abundance of anti-aircraft guns; designed to protect the battlewagons and carriers, or sometimes escorting transport convoys. The firepower, which those picket ships could lay-out was so withering, that it could cause a pilot, to pull away, abandoning the attack. But once back at headquarters, the other pilots would never criticize such men. Instead, the CO of the squadron would simply request that said pilot be transferred to another less combative command, maybe flying troops or cargo. The other pilots seemed to understand that not having courage wasn't

something to be criticized. The combat pilots, like my Dad and his squadron friends, never spoke ill of men, who failed to carry out the mission. Some people just have more than their share of irrepressible fear. It's a bit like asking a short man to be an olympic high jumper. Sometimes it's in the genes, other times not so much.

This aspect of brain physiology begs the question, just what is courage, or who is truly brave and who is a coward? Juries sometimes consider such things, as do military investigators, who make the determination for awarding medals. Women do it, during mate selection, for courage is a trait women generally like to see in their mate. It seems that everyone respects courage, regardless of sex, age, religion, or culture.

There is the real possibility that there has been something of a bias in awarding the congressional medal of honor. As of 2016, Mary Edwards Walker (1832-1919) is the only woman to receive said medal. She was an American feminist, abolitionist, prohibitionist, an alleged spy, a prisoner of war, and a practicing surgeon. In 1865, Dr. Walker was awarded the medal for her work, during the Civil War. Later, in 1917 her name was removed from the

honor list. In 1977, her family raised sand over the revocation of the medal, and Dr. Walker's medal was restored. Some things, like sexual prejudice, take too long to die, sometimes requiring the death of generations. As of writing this hodgepodge, 3514 people have received the medal, still only one is a woman! Really? Only men are extremely brave? Really? Having worked in a hospital and watched more than few terminally ill patients, I'd say that when it comes to dying, women generally display more courage. Moreover, the women seem to be more apt to show concern for the well being of the surviving offspring, than do the vast majority of males.

But let's face it, currently there is no valid scientific means to quantify courage or cowardice. Perhaps one day, with enhanced brain imaging, an actual qualification of bravery may be actually made. Certainly, people love to say that true courage is when you overcome your fear, and while that is a seemingly reasonable statement, it completely overlooks the fact that such ability may be neurologically determined, if not predetermined. Currently, no one knows exactly how to quantify an individual's fear or courage, or the neurons which act

to stimulate or inhibit the aforementioned areas. But as mentioned, there are people who are born to be courageous and those born to be cowards, depending on the size and functional state of the involved brain regions. Moreover, stress-induced release of the aforementioned beta-endorphin tends to block fear and pain, and the amount of this protein hormone, which gets released in response to different stressors, tends to be genetically determined.

Once out of the trap house and half buried under the couple's little house, my meager amount courage had run its course, and my cowardice ruled supreme. Disconcertedly, I recalled that only a few months prior, President Richard M. Nixon had vacated the United States presidency, or face a near certain impeachment, and John N. Mitchell, H.R. Haldeman, and John Erlichman were found guilty of the Watergate cover-up. I figured that if the President can be made to step-down, and his people prosecuted, I could be caught by the Mobile cops! When living just outside the District of Columbia, I'd visited the Watergate hotel, and the location of the famous break-in several times, and for various reasons, had decided that it was the famous multimillionaire and aviator, Howard Hogg, who

was sending the big checks to Nixon's campaign headquarters, so that Nixon would keep the United States military in the Vietnam war. That way, Howard Hoggs could continue to sell AIM-4 air to air missiles. Later, to be replaced by the AIM-9.

Of course, that war profiteering conveniently overlooked the deaths of thousands of Americans and millions of Vietnamese. One might think that killing on such a grand scale might require careful scrutiny of motive, begging the question... Is all the killing justified? Is communism really trying to take over the world, or is it just trying to rid people of oppressive dictators, kings, and various corrupt forms of government? In attempting to answer this question, it might be worth considering that Ho Chi Minh had sought the help of the United States several times. Perchance, the reason he'd appealed to Russia and the China was to get the French out of his home country. He was seeking help wherever he could get it, to free the indigenous people of Vietnam. The French had colonized his country, basically enslaving his peoples. That skinny little man, never had a family and never attempted to live in a grand style. There is the very real possibility, that he just wanted to help his countrymen, and heaven knows that the

French had been anything but kind to his countrymen. Uncle Ho was probably just trying to do the right thing, but because he'd received aid and arms from Russia, he was labeled a bad guy.

For most of my dusty fear-filled stay under the little homestead, my mind was indulging in pathetic paranoia. To this day, I castigate myself for my uncontrollable cowardice. After another hour, the two people in the house came back outside. The couple was dressed in clean plain clothing. He held the car door open for her. She said, "Thank you, Jason." Smiling he walked around the back of the spotless older white *Chevrolet Biscayne* and climbed into the driver's seat. They slowly backed-out into the street, then drove away.

What a nice simple life, such an uncomplicated life seems great. At that point, I was thinking that anything was better than serving years in prison, even massive amounts of boredom! *If I get out of this mess, I'll never as much as look at an illegal drug.* Of course, that was a lie. *I'll be happy just to have my humdrum life, back.* That too was a lie. Climbing from my shallow grave, I silently crawled toward the white lattice work.

Even while I was swearing those fallacious

promises, I knew I'd never be able to handle living such a pleasant little life; even though, it was filled with apparent love. At that very moment, it dawned on me that something was eschew with my way of thinking; in that, I didn't want what others did. Apparently, I didn't really want the nice little life, nor the life with the usual forms of success. During those four miserable post-withdrawal years, from age twelve through sixteen, such a boring life would have seemed ideal. But at age twenty-five, I wanted a life without commitment, and a life with some type of excitement, but I didn't have a clue what form it might take. It seemed that the only time a normal life appealed to me was when I was facing the bleak alternative of prison, or suffering with post withdrawal depression.

Foolishly, I had married my girlfriend just so her parents would speak with her, if indeed they had actually made that excommunication threat. My folks were thrilled that I had at last done something conventional. Back then, marriage and kids was the expected norm. Beneath that small house, half buried in the dust, pursued by the cops, I realized that I didn't welcome a normal existence, and so I concluded that something important in me was

broken. Everyone is indeed different, but I was seriously different, and not in the usual socially acceptable manner, not wanting close friends, and not the nine to five, with its usual slow progressive advancements, and not the ultimate respectful funeral, with one's friends and relatives uttering various nice things. Perhaps, it was under that house, that I came to realize it was time for a change, regardless of where it lead, without any form of ambition.

After spending approximately two hours under the house, I no longer heard the cops circling the area, so I made my way to the back of the structure, peered through the lattice-work, and spied a perfectly coiled green water hose in the couple's backyard. Covered in sweat and the choking dusty dirt, my skin was itching everywhere; hence, I was desperate to hose myself off.

Gently I pushed-out the white lattice-work, away from the brick house support, and squeezed through into the sprawling azalea bushes, which provided me with some concealment. A few minutes ago, there had been voices of two women chatting across the street, but they'd left, appearing to have returned to their respective homes. Luckily, the neighbors on

either side of the house didn't seem to be home. I hadn't heard or seen any kids, since they were probably still in school. My luck seemed to be improving. I dashed to the neighboring house, grabbed my shirt, and returned into the bushes.

Quietly, I pulled the hose back into the concealment of the bushes, where I hurriedly stripped off my remaining clothes, hosed down my entire body, washed my hair and shook it dry, then gently snorted water up into my dust-filled nasal cavities, and quietly blew several times. Lastly, I actually took the time to hand wash my clothes. That's when it dawned on me that I was probably severely dehydrated, with all the sweating, and I'd drunk nothing since the night before, so I slugged down some of the bitter hose water, but not enough to cramp my stomach. Still hiding amongst the bushes, I briefly rung-out my clothes, then awkwardly pulled them back on. Having done those things, I felt better, and recoiled the hose, so it laid as it did before I used it.

There was a small Greek deli six blocks to the South, with the ubiquitous pay-phone mounted on its exterior stucco wall. Pay-phones were only one thin dime, and you never had to walk more than a block,

to find one. Slowly jogging and occasionally sprinting, I made my way to the deli; all the while, I kept my ears and eyes on high alert for a cop. I kept looking for hiding places should I hear one, but fortunately that fearful sound didn't materialize.

Three blocks before reaching the deli, I spied some dry clothes on a clothesline in someone's backyard, so I scanned the nearby windows for eyes. Seeing none, I jumped the three foot white picket fence, snatched a man's yellow knit golf shirt off the line, and quickly took off my unclean gray T-shirt. The fresh yellow shirt fit perfectly. A few days later, I went back to that house, and put five dollars in their mailbox, but kept the shirt for a few years as a good luck souvenir. Perhaps, the Gods were smiling on me, but more than likely, they were snickering at me. I figured that with the yellow shirt, if a cop spotted me, I would look somewhat different, and less likely to get stopped and questioned.

Once behind the deli, I threw the filthy grey T-shirt in a trash barrel, covered it with some of the trash therein, then I went around front, called a cab from the pay phone, one the cab was on the way, I went inside to order an ice cold coke. Since then, cokes have always tasted like freedom. For the last

twenty years, I've stuck with drinking diet cokes, since diabetes runs in my family. As it turns out, my Mom and I are the only family members, without the dreaded disease... *knock on wood*.

Waiting inside the tiny air-conditioned Greek deli for the taxi, I heard by stomach growl, and kept thinking about the problem of my automobile, being parked and unlocked in front of the trap house, and how I was going to deal with the obvious predicament of explaining its sitting there to the police. The car meant that I, more or less, still had one foot in the police snare. No doubt, the cops had gone all through my car, and probably had it staked-out, or had towed it away to the police impound lot. Of course, the major worry, the drugs themselves, were no longer a problem. Without the drugs, it would be my word against Shades, and in my mind there was no doubt that Shades had a significant felonious history, and wouldn't remotely qualify as a creditable witness. Nevertheless, I didn't relish the idea that the cops knew I was involved with drugs. It was Shade's and Black's, as well as whomever was standing by that payphone when I picked-up Shades, testimony against my spotless record. None of the cops had seen my face, and only one, or maybe two,

had seen my back, as I'd run from the trap house, and vaulted over the six foot backyard fence.

Sipping my coke, I calmed down considerably. Slowly my tortured mind began to formulate a workable plan, something which could explain why my abandoned car was in the crime ridden neighborhood, directly in front of the trap house. At first, I just thought that I'd simply report my car as stolen, but certainly the cops would be expecting that rather predictable strategy. So instead, I confabulated a more elaborate, albeit a slightly humiliating plan. The air-conditioning in the deli, the water which I guzzled behind the couple's house, and soda's caffeine and sugar had imparted a small amount of confidence. My rehydrated stress-out faulty young gray matter was coming back to life, and the plan for dealing with the issue of my car had been formulated, before the cab had arrived.

Once in the cab, I asked the driver to take a circuitous route, allowing me to gaze down the street, on which I'd left my car parked. Sure enough, from the concealment of the cab's backseat, I could see that my old *Ford* was still parked where I'd left it, dead in front of, and across the street from, that fateful crazy trap house! Miraculously, the cops

hadn't towed it! I figured that the cops were hiding somewhere around there, waiting for me to return for my car, to grab me!

After a fifteen minute ride, the cab dropped me at a gas station, four blocks from my home. I was worried that the police might have had my home address, from calling in my car's plate number, and so had my house staked-out. Luckily, I didn't have a stolen plate on the car, at the time, since that might have resulted in my car being impounded, and my plan couldn't be executed. On the other hand, it would have added plausibility had I reported my car as being stolen.

After a brief but thorough reconnaissance of my home and neighborhood, I swiftly dashed into my house. My wife was at her temporary (four months) job, the first and only job she worked, during our marriage. I think she hated the idea of work. She was the kind of person, who felt that almost all work was beneath her. She would have liked to work as a professional, and although she had the brains, she was too lazy to hack the schooling.

Fearing that the cops could show at any second, I took an ultrafast shower, shaved, brushed my teeth, put on some nicely pressed grey cotton slacks, an

Oxford cornflower blue dress shirt, an alligator-skin belt, with polished matching alligator loafers, then finally I sprinkled-on a copious amount of *Old Spice*. These things were all integral to my plan. Then, I dashed out the door, ran to the nearby convince store and called another cab. Escaping the trap house, I'd had shoulder-length hair, had worn a smelly grey T-shirt, cut-off blue jeans, and old running shoes, plus I'd been in need of a shave.

The taxi dropped me two blocks from *Ray's Barber Shop*, one of Mobile's finest redneck hangouts. Going through Ray's door, I grabbed the first available chair, instructed the barber, that I needed my hair shortened to above my ears, but no whitewalls. I was the only customer. The three country barbers were shocked and happily convinced that I'd seen the light, by asking for a conventional haircut.

"You must have finally gotten Jesus, son." One commented.

"Let's just say, I've seen the light." I responded, fully realizing both the lie and the truth in that statement.

The barber chair, an extremely weighty leather,

porcelain, and steel contraption, rotated smoothly and looked as if it could withstand an atomic explosion. The sturdy structure has been passed down from the middle ages, when barbers were the early surgeons. People who were needing surgery would have to be tied and/or strapped down in said well built chairs, and so without benefit of anesthetic, the chairs had to withstand the struggling abuses of a large man straining to break free, against the unmitigated pain of surgery. It could be as simple as a tooth extraction, or a boil being lanced, to the pain of a broken bone being set, tonsils being removed, wounds being cauterized, or a limb being amputated.

In those days, the barbers did a lot more than the usual shaving of faces, and cutting of hair. They were employed by the armies to work on the injured soldiers, often digging and retrieving musket balls out of live unanesthetized soldiers. Consequently, the sharpened razor was an indispensable tool, much as the scalpel is for a surgeon, today. On the other hand, the early barbers also had scalpels. The red and white colors of the barber-pole, represented the blood and the bandages, but now the colors, just stand for a shave and haircut.

In the confederate racist minds of those good-ole-boy barbers, with just a few clips or snips, I had been transformed from hippie to hero, from sinner to saint, from atheist to believer, from liberal to conservative, all by letting them cut my hair. *Drastic times call for...* The redneck love gushed forth, that afternoon. My locks hit the ground, and they were so thrilled. They were so weird, and not just because they loved to hate, but because they knew they enjoyed hating, but assumed that since they were good to those who were like themselves, they were actually good people. They knew that they were the only people, who actually mattered, and with my conventional shearing, I had become one of them.

Hair is not much more than compressed strands of tightly packed dead cells, stuck together by a few flimsy desmosomes and an oily substance called 'sebum.' The length of the stacks of those dead cells made a tremendous difference in the Deep South. Long haired hippies preached love and lovingly people, and that was directly against the redneck code, of redneck for rednecks only. Anything over the ear and the wearer was labeled a liberal, and became the focus of condemnation. Even today in Mobile, long hair frequently has the same effect on

many of the older citizens. After my haircut, I used the shop's telephone to once again call a cab. The cab arrived in less than a minute, as I exited the barbershop, I heard various sincere comments of praise, issuing forth from those barbers, as well as a few of the patrons.

"Yes, sir! Now, you look like a real man! Good luck, son!"

"Don't that make you feel good, young fella? You actually have ears, now! You can probably hear better. Y'all come back real soon!"

"No more hippie, there! He's a real man, now!"

"Hope ta see ya here, every week."

"God be with you, son."

"You shoulda let me put a little *Dapper Dan* in your hair. Keeps it look'n right. Ya know?"

"That stuff's too fancy for me, but thanks anyway, guys!" I answered.

Before getting out of the barber chair, I'd asked the barber to make sure that there were absolutely no pieces of cut hair on my clothes, neck or head, no evidence that I'd recently received a haircut. Then it was time to deal with the problem of the

reacquisition of my condemningly parked car, and convincing the police, and hopefully I was going to accomplish this, without ending-up in jail.

The taxi dropped me off at the edge of Mobile's oldest graveyard, located behind *N.C. Smith's Tax Consulting Service*, just off Greg Street, where my wife, Margo was temporarily working that day, filling-out customers' tax returns, coincidentally just seven blocks from where my car sat, no doubt being watched by the police. As mentioned, she hated working, and only worked the one tax season. Later, I would tell my wife that I had cut my hair to appease my Dad, who loathed my shoulder length 'mop,' as he liked to call it. Since we'd supposedly gotten married to appease her parents, I figured my wife would believe my lie.

Once out of the cab, I was about a quarter mile from my car, and was headed toward it. I cut-up through the old aforementioned grave yard, whose arched stone entrance emptied out onto Velmont Street. A few blocks later, I could see my car was still sitting, right where I'd left it. *The cops haven't towed it, to the impound lot, yet.* Looking way down the length of Velmont street, I could almost see where I'd first picked-up Shades. Right then, it dawned on me,

that it had probably been the young black man by the pay phone, probably a police informant, who had initially called the police, letting them know I was heading to the trap house, with Shades, also a police informant. Where I'd stopped and parked in front of the trap house on *Velmont Street* was barely in visual range of that pay phone, so the guy at the payphone, when I'd picked-up Shades, had most likely knew I was in trap house, with Shades.

All cleaned-up, and dressed in my mainstream attire, while sporting my new conventional haircut, I walked from the direction of the graveyard, headed directly to my car. There didn't appear to be a cop anywhere in sight, but I was fairly certain they were hiding, waiting for me, watching from somewhere nearby. Certainly, Shades had pointed-out my car to them. Had the old *Ford* been towed, I had been prepared to walk-run, about a mile to the police station to report it stolen. Desperately, I wanted to look around, to see if I could spot the cops concealed nearby, but if they saw me looking for them, they would have thought me guilty. So, I just stared straight ahead and continued casually walking toward my car, as if I wasn't concerned, but knowing that they'd soon be coming. At the same time, I tried

to look like I was deep in thought, as if something was worrying me. This was part of my planned lie, my desperate contrived gambit. My brain was rehearsing the cascade of lies I'd probably soon be telling the cops.

When I arrived at my car and pulled open the unlocked creaky driver's door, amazingly no police came running out to arrest me. With a brief glance I could see the payphone far down Vermont Street. I wanted to look in the trunk to see if the backpack and hand towel had been moved, but I proceeded as if nothing was out of the ordinary, and still, did not look around to see if I could spot the cops, knowing they'd soon be coming. Once in the car, I fired it up, selected a country western station on the radio, to appease the cops, who might be listening, turned-up the volume, and began to slowly drive away. In those days, almost all the cops listened to country music. For the most part, that's still the case, here in Mobile. Although, I mostly preferred rock and roll, country music didn't sound too different. Hank Williams sort of reminded of Bob Dylan.

Sure enough, the police had been watching me. After driving only one block, two cruisers abruptly came out of a side street and pulled me over, one

went around me and parked in front of me, the other stopped six feet off my rear bumper. *This is designed to psych me out.* Evidently, they'd been waiting for over three hours. The two cops got out and came walking up to the car window, and the older policeman forcefully demanded my driver's license, and told me to step-out of the car. Now days, cops generally order the driver to remain inside the car. Ever so slightly, I adjusted the volume on the radio, as I exited. Dolly Pardon had suddenly come on the air, and continued to beautifully sing *Jolene*, as I climbed out. The song had been out for a couple years, but was still going strong, and appeared to register with the older larger cop.

“...Your smile is like a breath of spring
Your voice is soft like summer rain
And I cannot compete with you,
Jolene...”

The older cop was about six foot two and built wide and thick like a giant can of baked beans, and this is not to say he was fat, but rather he displayed the rather expansive rib-cage of a bull. His other

standout traits were his bushy bristly iron gray hair and heavy-duty gray eyebrows, each eyebrow large enough to have been a man's mustache, with some of the hairs looking like the legs on a daddy longlegs spider, pointing it various directions. Those weird eyebrows demanded that you stare.

His policeman's uniform displayed sergeant stripes on his upper arms, and his arms were thick, heavily muscled, yet too long, for his frame. He was also bow-legged, and where his arms looked too long for his body, his legs seemed too short, as if he'd been made from mismatched parts. The powerful cop, reminded me of Albert, the gentle powerful orangutang at the coot show, but opposed to the ape, he looked mean and hateful. The shirt was probably an extra-large, but was still too small, with the buttons pulling at the fabric, and barely holding back the massive barrel chest and ample beer belly.

Though built like a can of beans, he appeared to have the fighting nature of a warrior, the kind of man, who enjoyed a good fight, a street brawler, with a few pronounced hypertrophic facial scars to prove it. *All he needs is an excuse.* There was a small but conspicuous gelatinous red substance stuck to his shirt just below his silvery badge, which forced me to

recall the dollop of raspberry jam in the doughnut box at the trap house, which the blue-bottle fly had only briefly visited. Officer Can of Beans struck a wide stance, gently holding out his large right palm, to accept my license, which I was quick to handover. Even though, I'd carefully prepared for our encounter, it still jarred me. The sergeant would soon prove himself to be a crafty opponent.

“What’s up officer? I didn’t think I was speeding. I’ve only driven one block!” I commented, allowing a very slight southern accent to creep into my voice, since I wanted to appear less alien... more like a Mobile resident, for often if a southern cop senses that there’s a scintilla of yankee in someone, that person is in for some trouble. Next to a black person, there’s not much more irritating to a redneck, than a Yankee accent, and I needed every advantage, I could muster. With a sneer, Can of Beans abruptly snatched my license. First, he strummed the edge of it, back and forth against his other palm, while staring hard into my eyes, as if he could tell by looking, I was guilty. In response, I looked slightly confused about what was happening. Squinting, he then examined my driver’s license, while a disconcerting all-knowing smile began to appear on his wide heavy

boned face. *He's got the classic lantern jaw.*

The other cop, was probably in his early twenties, and just under six feet. He was lean, with exceedingly white skin, short dark auburn hair, and an oversized Adam's Apple, which needed shaving, with inch long reddish orange hairs protruding straight-out from it. *He hasn't shaved that Adam's apple for weeks.* The Adam's Apple seemed to have a life all its own, like a bobbing near hairless mouse just beneath the skin of his throat. This was the second redheaded cop I'd recently meant, the other was the mentioned detective, Vince Vocelli, in nearby New Orleans. *What's with these redheaded cops.* The younger policeman kept his thumbs inside his belt, while the other four fingers of each of his hands, drummed on his pants front, reminding me of the character Barney Fife from the *Andy of Mayberry Show*. Officer Adam's Apple frowned and kept glancing at my alligator loafers, my only formal shoes. I could tell that my drastic sudden change in appearance was working on Adam's Apple. He even whispered to Can of Beans, loud enough that I could barely hear.

“That's not him, Sarge. Maybe that other guy, who went over the fence, really was an undercover

cop.” Officer Adam Apple posited. Perhaps, it had been Adam’s Apple, who’d ordered me to stop, when I was running for the back fence, and I’d yelled that I was a cop.

Adam’s Apple’s comment plainly irritated Can of Beans, since my disguise hadn’t fully convinced Beans. But I still had a card or two up my sleeve. After looking at my driver’s license, Beans was yet smiling and again began to give me a penetrating look, as if he knew I was lying. Thank God, that in those days, the driver’s licenses didn’t have a photo on them, or it might have shown my long hair. Bean’s smile turned into a lopsided smirk, then a series of vertical furrows popped-up between his bushy gray brows. He barely nodded his head and chillingly stared at me for a good ten-seconds, before he decided to utter a word.

This is not too different from when Dad questioned me about pushing the guard off the cliff, only without any mashed potatoes. Perchance, the long knowing stare was intended to make me sweat, and I have to admit, at first it truly did. The long gaze seemed to be saying... *I know what you’ve been up to, asshole.* But then, I began to realize Officer Bean’s stare was just an overplayed bluff. Can of Beans didn’t realize,

that the absurdly long stare, had begun to fill me with confidence. *He doesn't have anything... just suspicion. He knows something, though.* After a certain point, it told me that he was completely unsure of himself, for if he had been certain about me, he would have arrested me. This unnecessary delay also implied that he probably didn't trust his own black informant, Shades, who'd led me into the trap house. The black guy standing at the payphone next to where I picked-up Shades could only ID my car.

Both Shades and the pay phone guy were black, and I was fairly sure Can of Beans was a certified card-carrying racist, and most likely, he didn't trust, if not disdained blacks; he was probably especially hateful of young black males with criminal records. Back then, many southern racist cops, viewed black people as if they were just one more type of domesticated animal. I prayed the cops wouldn't drag me in front of Shades to be identified; still, I was prepared with yet another lie to stand-down the informant, had it come to that. It would have been his word against mine, and as mentioned, I was certain he was the owner of a fairly hefty criminal record.

Had I been placed before Shades, my plan was

too immediately yell, “I remember you! You’re that jerk, who stole the money out of my car the other day.”

Then I’d quickly explain to the police that, a few weeks ago, I’d seen him in my car, and that my car had been again parked close to the trap house. I’d say that I’d chased him, but couldn’t catch him. But that, when I returned to my car, I found my money was missing, from the car’s ashtray. It wasn’t a great deception, but it just might convince the cops that the nefarious Shades had a reason to lie and set me up. The idea was to convince the cops that Shades and the guy by the payphone had seen me park my car there by the trap house and decided to frame me for another man’s crime, the long haired man who’d actually been in the trap house with him, but who’d gotten away over the back fence.

Right then, Dolly Parton finished her song, and an ad for *The Mobile Greyhound Park* came over the air. To complete my facade, I needed the cops to ask me what I had been up to, while parked there, and as if by magic, Can of Beans did exactly that.

“Says here, on your driver’s license, that your home address ain’t any where near this here part of town, son. So, you mind filling me in on why your

car was parked up there, dead in the middle of niggerville, for the last few hours, Mr. Joseph Bone?”

Can of Beans asked this, while baring his teeth, and pointing up the road to where I'd been parked in front of the trap house. He definitely was a good-ole-boy, and even though there was a burning anger and a dark enmity in his soul, I could still see the little boy, who used to be the playground bully. My planned excuse, which I was about to reluctantly give Beans, would hopefully make my being there seem plausible.

“I'd rather not tell you why I parked my car right there, sir. After all, I haven't broken any laws. I wasn't speeding.” I said, still affecting my slight southern drawl, anything to keep Can of Beans from losing his cool, and taking me to the police station.

That preplanned answer brought out something sinister in Beans. His toothy smile blossomed, and transformed into a major lopsided sarcastic sneer. *Jesus, he thinks he's got me.* He laughed and looked at Officer Adams Apple, then his head quickly swiveled back around toward me, and once again, he bared his big teeth. *He looks like he's going to bite me.* Perhaps, Beans had really missed his calling as an actor; move

over Clifton James, who was the guy who'd played Sheriff J.W. Pepper, in the James Bond movie *Live and Let Die*, just a couple of years prior. Can of Beans raised his index finger and began to lecture me.

“Well, son, I don't really give a rat's ass about your... ‘I'd rather not,’ cuz if'n you don't tell me about why your car was parked back there, you and me is going to the station and you is gonna be under arrest, and go'n to jail, and you'll be get'n grilled by our investigators. Do you understand me, Mr. Joseph Bone, Mr. I'd Rather Not?” He glibly threatened, while further refining his angry smile.

Frowning uncertainty, I replied. “If it's going to come to all of that, I'll sure tell you, but the reason I parked there is kinda personal, but I sure don't want to go to jail, or not'n like that! So okay, I'll tell you.”

“Well, then, let's hear it young man, or I'll show you the real meaning of the word personal. Ya see, jail can be real personal. There are some real personable guys in there. You hear what I'm say'n to you? Enlighten me, son. Why was your car parked back up the street there?”

At this point, I decided it was the perfect time to look terrified, and launch into my preplanned ‘Come-

to-Jesus' speech. Sure as hell, I had no problem letting my real fear rush to the surface. After all, I'd been holding it at bay for hours. No doubt, my fright looked completely genuine, since it was. My look worked well enough to produce a smile on both their faces. To be more convincing, I let out an exaggerated exhalation, hung my head, shook it back and forth, and shuffled my right foot on the asphalt, and with my best shot at an authentic mild redneck accent, I laid out my deception.

“You see officers, my wife, she been work’n over there, a few blocks away, south’ah that there ole graveyard. She works at *N.C. Smith Tax Consulting Service*, next to that big ole brick armory; you know, with all the Army trucks out back of it. Well, see I think she been fool’n round with this older fella that works there. I think they call him Slim. Ever since she started working there, we haven’t had the usual spark, if you know what I mean. Shit, it been two months, since we done anything like husband and wife are supposed to.” I said this, shaking my head back and forth. *Time to stall a just bit.*

At that point, I took a big breath, and uttered the word ‘Shit!’ Again, I then let another two-second pause drift by, before I continued on, still shamefully

looking down at the asphalt. Timing can be everything, when delivering a convincing lie.

“So, I’ve been spy’n on her for the last few hours. Done been sit’n in them bushes by that there graveyard, and some a that time I was over in the bushes on the other side of that ball field, across Greg Street, watch’n that tax office just to see, who I could catch her come’n outta there with. I was gonna pound the line’n shit outta Slim, if’n I saw her kiss’n on him or holden hands! But in all that time, I didn’t see nothing. Maybe, I’m just worry’n bout nothing. Hope so, anyway.”

For added convincing drama, I drove my right fist into my left palm. Then, I paused and frowned hard for additional effect.

“I parked my car right over there, cuz I didn’t want my car too close to the tax office, where it might be seen, if’n she or someone else who works there, drove off, to eat lunch, or to go to get something from a store. I didn’t know I weren’t supposed to park there, and didn’t think it would cause no trouble. Ain’t y’all ever suspected your wife or girlfriend a cheat’n on you?” I asked, this in an effort to establish slight camaraderie.

Having blurted that out, I did my best to appear shame-faced. Luckily, my wife did work at the tax office. Culminating my pithy speech with a big sigh, I just stood silently staring at Can of Beans, dead in his eyes. He stared back at me and smirked, but then looked away, glancing at Officer Adam's Apple. Adam's Apple smiled as if the entire episode was a huge joke, but the truth was the two cops believed me, and were simply enjoying my humiliation. Where Beans was canny, Adam's Apple was simply an idiot.

“Jesus, you guys sure know how to make a guy embarrass himself. You just feel the need to shame me, like that? Now, can you tell me what I did wrong, by just parking my car over there?” Faking being mildly irritated, I asked this, fully anticipating Bean's next question.

Beans thought about two more seconds, then said, “What's your wife's name?” Beans wasn't completely buying my story. The old cop was a hard sell, indeed. Still, I admired his tenacity and thoroughness. Again, I put on a worried expression.

“You're not going to be tell'n her that I been spy'n on her, are y'all? Jesus, man! My life's bad ah nuff, without her know'n that I'm spying on her. Why

ya gotta do something like that? Christ!” I had thrown myself into a contrived panic over this situation, doing my level best to look desperate, begging Beans not to tell her, all the while thinking that I probably felt like Briar Rabbit], and the briar patch.

“I’m asking the questions here, son; and, I don’t give two shits, if’n she’s cheat’n on you, or if you’re embarrassed. I got bigger fish to fry! And, I don’t care if you were spy’n on her, and I don’t intend to tell her shit. Just tell me what her God damn name is, or I’ll be take’n you in to the police station.” He threatened, but his demeanor had slightly softened.

He believes me! Can of Beans lied on one thing. He did feel bad about my wife supposedly cheating on me. His eyes said it, and so I assumed that he had at least partially bought into my lie. His vocabulary was harsh, but his voice had lost its original boastful arrogance. And, some starch had come out of his wide bow-legged stance. There was the smallest tad of sympathy as he gazed back at me, and there was no more contemptuous toothy grin. *He’s experienced a cheating wife.* Reluctantly giving-in, I told him her name, Mrs. Margo Bone. Can of Beans turned and instructed Adam’s Apple to tell police dispatch to

telephone the tax office, and to check out if she actually worked there, without divulging why. The pale white red-headed Officer Adam's Apple retreated to the rear car for about four minutes. Beans said nothing. As we waited, I thought about the tiny red blob on Bean's shirt, just below his badge, and that empty doughnut box in the trap house.

"Got something on your shirt, sir." I said pointing at the red gooey substance.

"Oh crap... damn doughnut." Beans mumbled, while looking down at his shirt. *Beans was eating doughnuts, drinking coffee, and reading the paper in the trap house. Maybe it's where he relaxes, in the morning.* He used his right thumb nail to flick and scratch at the red gel, leaving just a dark mark on the shirt. He still seemed distracted about my comment, concerning my cheating spouse. His mind may have been searching through his past. *He wants to leave, now.*

"Looks like it was raspberry." I ventured, since he'd said, 'Damn doughnut.'

"Yeah." He said, rolling his eyes.

Beans definitely wasn't up for small talk. Maybe, he was thinking about whether Shades had lied to

him. Since Shades was black, and Beans had just used the word ‘niggerville,’ I was positive that Beans hated Shades and didn’t trust him. There wasn’t a salient reason to push Can of Beans for a minor amount of bonding, but I did, anyway.

“That’s my favorite, too.” I commented, concerning the raspberry doughnut. *Cop or criminal, we all love doughnuts.*

But, Beans didn’t begin to warm to me. He was all business, yet he silently nodded. There were bad memories lurking behind his slightly bloodshot eyes, and producing small jerks in the corners of his menacing toothy mouth. It was implicit that something unpleasant was boiling, just below his cranium. Can of Beans wanted this situation to be over with, one way or the other. *I bet his wife cheated on him, or maybe she’s dead.* Beans hated waiting. He could tell I was prone to conversation, and he didn’t like that. It was at that moment, I switched tactics and decided to put the whammy on Shades.

“You know, I was spy’n on my wife a couple days ago, and left my car parked one street over, in this same area, and had some cash and my watch stolen outta the glovebox and ashtray. When I was come’n back through the graveyard, I saw this real skinny

black dude with some big sunglasses on his face. That black guy flipped me the bird, as he ran away laughing. I chased him, but he was fast and got away. See, my Dad gave me that watch. I really hated los'n it. The black guy must ah used a coat hanger to get in my car. I shouted and he ran, with my Dad's watch and money. So today, when I parked there, I made sure nothing worth anything was in the car, and I left it unlocked, so nobody would bust-out a window trying to get in."

Purposely, I omitted mentioning the most obvious item, the shiny belt buckle, because it looked so new that Shades may not have had it the day before. The physical description I'd given certainly fit Shades. Beans squinted at the asphalt real hard and gritted his teeth. *He believes me!* The muscles in his jaw were notably flexed, as he ground his teeth. I had introduced enough doubt for Beans not to be sure that I was a drug dealer, then I saw Officer Adam's Apple returning.

"Yeah boss, Mr. Bone here is tell'n the truth, his wife works at the tax place, alright. The dispatcher just pretended he wanted to get his taxes done and asked for this guy's wife. When she answered the phone, dispatch just confirmed her name and hung-

up, so she probably just thinks it's a prank call, or it got disconnected. Looks like Mr. Joe here is tell'n us the truth." The large bulbous Adam's Apple bobbed-out this message, as if it was some weird red hairy morse code.

I couldn't get used to the Officer Adam's Apple having those dozen or so inch-long reddish orange hairs bristling-out from his pronounced Adam's Apple. *He needs to shave his throat.* Beans at last seemed to soften, and looked somewhat satisfied, concerning my innocence. But then once again, he briefly looked miffed; perhaps, just incase, I had been lying.

"Well son, I guess you can go, now. Lucky for you, your story checked-out... sorry about detaining you, so long. *He actually said, 'sorry!'* But, this ain't exactly a good neighborhood for you to be in, less'n you're a nigger lover. I'd ah thought you ah learned your lesson, after your watch and money got stolen. Next time, that worthless nigger criminal may take your whole car instead of just your watch and cash." Beans predicted.

I suspected that Beans didn't like the fact that I had referred to Shades as a black guy, rather than as a n__r. Beans didn't seem like such a cool dude,

right then. He handed me my license, with a dramatic flip of his thick meaty wrist. Suddenly, all the sympathy was gone from his demeanor, and he was back to scrutinizing me. *Jesus, he's a tough nut to crack, but then he is a cop.* Perhaps that commentary was a final show of bravado to impress Adam's Apple.

My bet was that Beans was an evening alcoholic, as well as a lonely dude, who probably wasn't long for the world, but wasn't going to be too upset about leaving the planet. Judging from the veins in his temples, he had a serious case of hypertension. If, as you get older, life gets sour, it may make dying less fearsome. I couldn't tell if he was trying to determine, if I was a black sympathizer, or if I commiserated with him that blacks were something subhuman. *Maybe his wife cheated on him with a black man. That might explain things.* He might have been a decent guy had he not been born in the South, and raised as a racist, to become an angry cop, or maybe the meanest was simply in his DNA. Perchance, some lives drag-out for the sole purpose of making it easier to die. Racism does make some amount of evolutionary sense, since people who tend to look more alike are apt to have more DNA in common. So

what's one to do... judge people by their DNA, or judge people by their integrity?

As mentioned, in those days, there was a fair percentage of Mobile cops, who were *KKK* members. Even today, Mobile is one of America's last remaining bastions of rampant racism. Back then, about the only good thing you'd hear a racist say about a black person was that, Hank Aaron, who came from Mobile, hit his 715th to break Babe Ruth's record. Hank ended his career with 755 home runs. Hank had been born and raised in and around Mobile. Even the SS let certain Jews forego being gassed, if they had a useful or remarkable talent.

While listening to Officer Beans' farewell address, I recalled senselessly burning the cross in front of the school, ten years before. Fortunately, there were no black people, who'd gotten out of a car that evening. It seems nothing short of amazing to me, that the vast majority of blacks still live in the Southeast, where slavery flourished, and racism yet abounds. Go figure! If I were a black person, I think I would want to move somewhere out west: Oregon, Colorado, Utah, Nevada, etc., almost any other state out of the Southeast US is better than Mobile, Alabama, when it comes to racism. Of course, if

you're taking hate crimes against Latinos, California might be the worst state.

Still affecting my slight redneck articulation, I questioned Beans. "Thank you, sir. But this here neighborhood is where I work, most every day. I'm ah district manager for the newspaper and this here street is part of my district. So, would it be okay to ask you why you was stop'n me, bout my car be'n parked over there?"

"No, it wouldn't be okay. You don't know when to quit and leave. Just be glad your story checked out. Now get on with you! Leave it at that, son and get out here!" He stated this, while turning away to get in his car.

My ship had been righted; its sails billowed forth, and I headed for the liquor store, to purchase a dependable pint of *JB*. The shop owner was usually good enough to let me drink in the back room, leaning back in a well-worn lazy boy, while watching the some sports game on a small box TV. The backroom of the liquor store was like a tiny home away from home, a place where a few inebriated guys could sit, drink, and enjoy something on the boob-tube. Perhaps, the depressing little trap house was like that for Beans, only with the newspaper,

doughnuts, and his coffee.

Even after my escape from the terrifying trap house, I still failed to wake up and grasp just how idiotically I was behaving. The attraction of making money was too strong. Oxymoronicly, in an effort to tone down my waywardness, I ended-up ramping it up. Perhaps, I was doing anything and everything to force myself to have to depart from the dull, depressing, and frustrating city of Mobile, Alabama. It wouldn't be until years later, when I began to develop an interest in science, that I would more fully appreciate the wanton wastefulness of my younger years. There are those rare nights, when I dream my regrets, where I'm shocked to find that I'm missing my fingers, toes, and teeth. Something tells me that those lost anatomical structures are in fact, my wasted years. Sometimes, I find myself lying in my dreams, and so I wake with feelings of shame.

I got home an hour later than usual that night, since I'd left the liquor store to drive to a park by the southwest end of Mobile Bay and watch the sunset, and drink a bit more than usual. One of the advantages of being a child alcoholic, is that you behave fairly normally, when you're smashed, and you don't mind drinking alone. When I got home, I

told Margo that I felt dirty and grungy, and quickly dashed to the bathroom, stripped off my clothes, took a shower, then soaked a washcloth in rubbing alcohol and wiped off, ergo I was expected to smell like alcohol, and then I told my good wife that I thought I was getting the flu, so I could get straight to bed, without her questioning about my day.

Staring at my conservative haircut, she asked me why I was so dressed-up, and I told her that the newspaper had a going away party for one of its' longtime stringers. And as mentioned, I lied telling her that the haircut was to appease my Dad. While generally adrenaline makes sex sweeter, that night I was soundly hammered, and so I just climbed into our bed, and slept the peaceful sleep of a dog-tired drunk drug dealer. My wife probably knew something was off kilter, but she was more than smart enough to ignore it. No one enjoys the stench of lies; I know I didn't like being lied to about having kids, so I was no longer concerned about telling her the truth about anything.

My life has always been something of a dichotomy; sometimes being a bit generous, and then at other times, not so much. I've always struggled with a few unpleasant inner numina, and sometimes I

feel I've done quite well, especially considering their magnitude and persistent perniciousness. Though clearly there have been times when I've failed badly. As much as many people may not agree, morality may be much like any other aspect of human behavior... owing to some inherent hard-wired piece of neurophysiology. Never have I needed to avail myself of a religious leader to know what was moral and what wasn't. While I certainly lacked moral fiber, I never saw the point of seeking outside council; inherently, I knew it would have made no difference. Once you've heard all the pros and cons, what's the point of hearing them again and again?

Popular psychologists love to rave on about how important the influences of experience and environment are, and while those factors can indeed be highly significant, why is it that people have gotten to the point, that they almost disregard hard-wired (genetically based) neurophysiology, when it's more than obvious that DNA makes a huge difference. My aforementioned friend, RC, once told me that the reason for the gross oversight of the importance of DNA was because it gives the masses some form of ill-placed hope. He was right. On the other hand, at times it may not be ill-placed, but

desperately needed.

Perhaps, the more plastic and flexible the various behavioral neurophysiological manifestations, the easier they can be manipulated to serve each individual's preferred morality. The parts of my brain designed to create a moral being were probably killed-off early, by daily childhood drinking, or I was destined to be without much morality to begin with; after all, my one paternal Grandpa ran a whorehouse, while the other worked hard to put killers, muggers, and rapists back on the street. On-the-other-hand, perhaps I'm just trying to justify my bad decisions and there is actually no excuse. I do like the idea of being a somewhat moral person, to be socially accepted, ergo I'm not a total psychopath, but on the psychopathy scale, I've probably ranged from a five to a nine. So far in these books, I haven't gotten to the killings. At times, I've relished the idea of living out on a desert or deep in the woods, with only a light weight dependable motorcycle.

There have been those times, when I tried hard to make friends with someone, who was obviously a very good and moral person, but they rejected me, when I felt that I'd done nothing to warrant their rejection; so, I then suspect that somehow they'd

gotten the blink (shades of Malcolm Gladwell) on my demons. Being rejected for your demons can hurt, and leaves you wondering about your self worth, but if you're a psychopath, only for a little while. Being an only child, who regularly moved and switched locations and friends, allowed me to recover from such rejections more easily, since continually changing friends makes you not need people, quite so much; plus, you're less likely to feel lonely! Simply put, people don't matter as much, when they get changed every couple of years. In various respects, some friends always remain strangers, and some selfish strangers will try to call you friend, just to get something. In some respects, the fictional characters in books, and of course they're all fictional, have been better and more memorable friends, than those I've known in real life. It's all a matter of gray matter, both the hardwiring and the more plastic learned parts, and how they hook-up with one's cognition, and existing memories, senses, emotions, and desires.

The paperboys tended to recognize my good guy personality, yet they probably sensed the other. Some folks care about demons and others not so much. The older I get, the weaker the demons become, and the

better I get at controlling, or at least concealing them. If I live long enough, I might actually become a socially acceptable person, but I doubt it. This may have something to do with getting tired of dealing with all the trouble they caused, and the fact that getting older has its concomitant reduction in circulating testosterone. Everything is chemistry, every single: thought, feeling, perception, inspiration, emotion, etc., are nothing but the jostling of atomic particles. What else could they be? Nothing works without viable biochemistry. Just ask any corpse, and you'll always get the same answer. _____



REVENGE

Still managing the distribution of newspapers in the Mobile ghetto, where the trap house was located, I kept my eyes sharply peeled for my roughish black friend, Shades, as well as for my traitorous African American former dealer, Black, who'd no doubt turned me in to the local cops. In a very practical way, Shades had done me a favor by telling me that it was Black, and while he'd done what he had to do, he'd only done the bare minimum. Nevertheless, he'd set me up, and had events gone as intended, I would have been in prison. So, everywhere I went, I looked for my former dealer, Black, and the notorious

informant Shades.

I hadn't a clue about where Shades might hangout, but since Black was clearly working for the Mobile cops, and probably would be for years to come, I figured that he was probably still somewhere within the city. In those days, rarely were informants shared between cities. My best hope of finding him, was my group of ever vigilant paperboys. Nothing escaped their notice. Before the trap house incident, my dealer Black had lived in a small, but relatively nice, shiny *Airstream* trailer, set-up in the corner of Mobile's Jewish cemetery. He worked as the grounds attendant, and resident grave digger. He mowed the grass, trimmed the green blades away from the grave stones, spread weed killer and fertilizer, cleaned the bird poop from the grave stones, but left the small stones atop, threw away the wilted flowers, set-up a large burgundy canopy and folding chairs for the old folks at the burial ceremonies, and ran a small backhoe to do the digging and filling-in, positioned lowering machine for the ceremony, etc. Another group from the temple was in charge of lowering the casket. After a Jew has "shuffled off [their] mortal coil," they were buried quickly and without being embalmed... back to nature. Oddly enough, Black

was not only the token black, but an atheist, but then heaven and hell isn't such a prime focus in Judaism, as it is in Christianity. Perhaps, the Mobile Jews were more forgiving the Christian God. You've got to wonder about God's allowing such massive suffering of the ignorant... forever burning!

How many people have listed grave digger, drug dealer, and police informant on their resume? *Ahavas Chesed* cemetery maybe the oldest Jewish cemetery in Mobile, but it only dated back to 1898, since it might well have been tantamount to suicide for a Mobilian Jew in to have admitted being Jewish, before then, since the first klan movement was big in the 1860s, 70s, and 80s. Even now, there are plenty of southern racist, who hate Jews, almost as much as they hate African Americans. Almost every evening I sit with a group of old racists outside I pawnshop, and one of them takes every opportunity to expound on how the Jews are taking-over the country. Many of the older Alabamians still look at Jews with a jaundice eye... something about betraying Jesus and only caring about money, no real national pride...; little has changed in the last two thousand years. As of late in Mobile, there is less hatred toward the Jews and more directed towards blacks. Some folks really

know how to hold a grudge, or they simply enjoy hating. Most of Mobile's dead Jews are buried in *Ahavas Chesed*. Besides being objects of scorn for the KKK, many were extremely wealthy pillars of Mobile Society. Oddly enough, a Jew named, Lazarus Schwarz was elected as Mobile's mayor in 1911, and served until 1915. Mayor Schwarz may have been the world's greatest diplomat. The mayor of Mobile and a Jew in 1911, might be like Stephen Wise being appointed chancellor of Germany in 1933.

<http://rt.com/usa/kkk-attack-jewish-center-kansas-416/>

It seemed strange, yet appropriate that the dead wealthy and influential Jews were being cared for by a young black drug dealer. Black had once told me that he was Jewish, but I never believed him, still he wore the little gold six pointed Star of David, around his neck, still he never went to services. Like me, Black was a born liar, a requirement to be an effective drug dealer. After a call to the *Ahavas Chesed Synagogue*, where I claimed to be a potential employer for Black, and doing a little background check, the assistant rabbi's secretary informed me

that Black had quit a few days earlier, probably the day he'd been busted, and to the best of her knowledge was not a member of the temple. Black was a lady's man, so I figured he was likely living somewhere, with his latest conquest.

To locate the traitorous Black, I employed a highly sophisticated intelligence network; namely, my twenty black paperboys. Each of my kids knew about Black, as the guy who lived in the trailer behind the Jewish graveyard and dug the graves. The kids also knew various people, who knew him. The paperboys called him things like: the digger, graveyard man, black death, the cheap creep, etc. Each of them knew exactly what Black looked like, hence I had but to ask them to keep an eye out for him. My hyper-observant paperboys were better than *CIA* satellite surveillance and Scotland Yard combined. Nothing escaped their notice. This was partially owing to the fact that each of my paperboys knew paperboys in other districts of the city. Every morning, large numbers of paperboys spent about an hour wrapping their newspapers, where they'd discuss all manner of topics, and so huge amounts of intelligence was exchanged. None of my paperboys knew anything about Shades, so I figured that the

cops had brought him in from another city.

In search of my nemesis Black, I periodically drove past the graveyard, in the off chance he might have returned to the trailer to retrieve something he'd left, but no love there. I'd also drive passed the trap house, thinking I might see Shades, but didn't catch a glimpse of him. By merely driving-by the dilapidated shotgun shack, I was filled with a apprehension, and it still slightly creeps me out a wee bit, today. In fact, all I have to do is think about that day, and I can relive those heart-pounding effects. Often, I have thought about trying to buy the dilapidated hovel simply for the pleasure of burning it to the ground. In fact, just writing about that close call has had an unnerving effect on me.

One of the things that separates humans from animals is that we may repeatedly use our memories to re-pump adrenaline, over and over, like those old combat vets, who love to talk about the war with their comrades in arms. By relating and reliving their war stories, they literally enlarge their adrenal glands, ergo keep pumping excessive amounts of adrenaline, and so, they never rid themselves of their *PTSD*, with the corresponding nightmares, since *PTSD* is largely a product of adrenaline and cortisol,

both produced by the adrenal glands. People have a way of reliving their past, besides their nightmares. It's plausible that some parts of the brain enjoy and thrive on those recollections.

In a weird way, the sinner who goes to Catholic confessional, or the Islamist, who goes to confess in his Salat with Allah, could be purposely or subconsciously reliving their adrenaline-pumping memories. Sure people would like to believe that each person is sincere about such admissions/confessions of guilt. In one way or another, we all reverently revisit our sins. So many of us live under the delusion that we do so, because we want to be forgiven, and that we're truly penitent for what we did; when in fact, the memory of a shameful sin can be quite dependable for its stimulating neurochemical effects.

Although, I'd been betrayed by Shades, the police informant, who was wearing the big rodeo buckle that scary day, and by Black, my grave digging former drug dealer, who'd no doubt given me up to the police, I was barely reflective enough not to be too quick for revenge; nonetheless, it was revenge I wanted. Without a doubt, the police would be anticipating a reflective response from me. Had I

needed a quick vengeance, I knew a few brutal folks, who owed me favors, but for the time being, I elected to remain patient, to wait and watch, since I knew the police were probably watching me. I was genuinely thankful, that each of my drug dealers, thought they were my only client.

Delaying my revenge had a lot to do with the fact that, I had a virtual army of hyper-vigilant kids regularly supplying me with enormous amounts of information, and then there were pieces of info constantly being supplied by my non-busted ever watchful drug dealers; ergo, it just seemed reasonable that something useful would eventually shake out soon enough, if I only waited for the opportunity.

Revenge is best served at the appropriate time, so that the recipient, thinks that the retribution is their own fault, and remains completely clueless of your involvement. The city's trap house had barely failed to ensnare me, but had psychologically hammered me, so just having escaped that trap was enough risk for the time being. It was like I was in some kind of zone, where subconsciously and consciously, I sensed that with a little forbearance sweet revenge would soon be mine! In the case of

Shades and Black the revenge turned-out to be over-the-top, and required very little action on my part; it was like rolling off the proverbial log... a gift from God. Though God may say that revenge is his, I suppose it doesn't have to exclude your acting as his agent, just ask any modern-day terrorist.

Waiting for revenge seemed the prudent way to proceed; for one thing, after the trap house, the cops seemed likely to be looking for a reaction from me, and for all I knew, they may have infiltrated other people, who knew me. Next to my wife and parents, the only people I trusted were the paperboys. For two weeks, my paperboys had nothing to report, and neither they, nor I, saw hide nor hair of the malicious Shades or Black. Both seemed to have just fallen off the face of the earth. For a short while, I began to think that my two villains might have left Mobile. I still wondered if Beans, the older cop, had believed my contrivances, and suspected that Shades had stolen my watch and cash. I also wondered if Beans had locked Shades away, and if so, I'd already gained a modicum of payback. I wasn't worried about my other dealers, since none of them knew about the others. I'd gone to great pains to convince each of them, including Black, that they were my only

dealer; it was one of Harold's suggestions about drug-dealing, one which I'd written down in the back of his *Mercedes*, that first day that I'd meant him, with his sexy latest 'squeeze'.

In those days, my life was an exhausting juggling act: paperboys, drug dealers, my supplier Harold, my family, and a wife, who had just had her sudden transformation of desperately wanting kids, which was at that time a terrifying prospectus for me... too much pressure. Every female I'd ever meant, once they'd decided to have kids, that was it; they never changed their mind, unless they'd hit menopause. Genetically established neurocircuitry, as well as estrogen, oxytocin, and testosterone hormones, along with their respective central receptors have their way of creating a certain sexual consciousness, with demands which 'seem' totally reasonable, when in fact they're anything but; like a well made but out of control perpetual motion machine, it's simply DNA wanting to self-replicate itself into the future, while not giving a hoot about the damage it may inflict on the earth, or it's citizens, in the process.

Since I didn't know the traitorous Shades, but I knew and had been good and kind to Black, of the two men, I was far more angry with Black. As stated,

Shades had actually clued me into the fact that it was Black, who'd set me up, nor had Shades tried to scatter my orange microdots, or attempted to hold me back from escaping the trap house. Intuitively, I realized Shades's heart wasn't into being an informant; nevertheless, he had hung me out to dry, and had come within a second of getting me shot or shipped off to prison. One of the worst parts of going to prison would have been my Dad finding out, since Dad was my only real touchstone.

Due to the fear of prison, Shades was no doubt operating at the beck and call of the police, following they're threatening mandates, yet he indirectly allowed me to escape. The unknown Shades had operated in accordance with what the police had ordered him, still he allowed me just enough wiggle room to set myself free. Nevertheless, he remained in my mind a potent enemy, against whom I would soon have my revenge, but it would be by my simply doing nothing... not warning him. All I had to do was to hold his gaze, just long enough that he didn't notice the guns, that were slowly being aimed at him, as described, herein. Since the day of the trap house, I was doing my best to remain vigilant, not being up for a repeat performance. 'Fool me once

shame on you, fool me twice...' Perchance, only George Bush Junior knows the rest of that famous old saying, or at least he seems to have thought he did. It's hard to believe that he was actually our...

[https://www.youtube.com/watch?](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=8Ux3DKxxFoM)

[v=8Ux3DKxxFoM](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=8Ux3DKxxFoM)

Unlike Shades, Black knew me quite well, and I had been extremely generous with him. Twice I'd loaned him money, once for his mother to go to the doctor, and another time to bail-out his cousin, who had a bad habit of getting in bar fights and writing bad checks; plus, I'd taken him to lunch more than a few times. Black had betrayed me, and I had trusted him. Moreover, I had told Black that if he were to ever get nailed by the cops, to simply let me know, and I'd make sure that he'd get bailed-out, set him up with an attorney, then he and I would stage a fake failed scenario to get me busted, so he could appear to have attempted to placate the police, a situation where it would seem he'd made a valid attempt, but it wouldn't be quite adequate for a successful arrest or prosecution, due to some unforeseeable circumstances. Perhaps, he could arrange for me to

be pulled over by the police, and then I'd make a rather obvious effort to dump some legal over-the-counter pills in my can of acetone, alcohol, and gasoline, and shake it like a martini, so there'd be no prosecutorial evidence, but Black would have been off the hook, as far as I was concerned, and what I'd actually dropped in the can would simply be aspirin and antihistamines. Consequently, Black would have appeared to be cooperative concerning me. Perhaps, I could have arranged a serious looking by non-life threatening beating for Black, by one of my friends, who owed me a favor.

Moreover, I'd told Black that there were plenty of other dealers, who dealt highly addicting cocaine and heroin, which the police would likely be more interested in. I could have easily steered Black onto those dealers, should he needed to appease the police with additional more serious busts. Dealing in hard drugs is like dealing in slaves. Pre-civil war plantation owners at least tried to look out for the physical health of their slaves; whereas, the dealers of hard drugs inflict a slow debilitating death.

Arranging a drug bust for Black would have been a snap. All these things and more, I'd made clear to Black, so that if he ever got busted, he wouldn't sell

me down the river, but even with all my assurances, Black caved-in under police pressure, and gave me up. I'd made these self-protective comments, with all my dealers.

I knew the hitman for Mobile's biggest cocaine dealer, and he owed me favors, I could have used him for revenge, but I wasn't sure Black deserved the death penalty. The notorious cocaine dealer was also a car dealer, and he hated competition in the cocaine market, so I could have simply set Black up with some of the car dealer's cocaine competitors and then notified said hitman. Luckily, Black didn't know my name, my car tag, where I worked, or where I lived. He'd only known what I looked like, and the description of my car, but apparently at some point, he had somehow pointed me out to Shades. Later, my paperboys would confirm that Shades and Black knew each other, and both had been recently busted. They also said that Shades was from Birmingham.

My revenge for the near bust at the trap house would arrive in unexpected ways. In both cases, Shades and Black, each of them would nearly die; in fact, Shades may have actually died; to date, I'm uncertain if Shades lived. With what happened to Shades, I only subtlety participated, but with Black, I

orchestrated it, with pleasure and premeditation, yet Black didn't die.

Revenge on Shades, came along a few weeks after the fiasco at trap house. Around 3:45 a.m., I was dropping-off two thick sixty pound newspaper bundles, carrying one in each hand, to the same corner of *DeHeller* and *Velmont streets*; where I coincidentally, I'd first laid eyes on the illustrious Shades, who'd then been leaning up against the brick wall facing *Velmont Street*. Several black night clubs were located there, and lots of shootings, fatal and otherwise, occurred there. Lots of club goers were out that night. The infamous little corner was known for drug dealings. It was still dark, and the air was cool and fresh. Occasionally, I'd note the aromatic scents of weed, tobacco, alcohol, sex, cologne, or even the briny air coming from the Gulf of Mexico, just two clicks South.

One block from that intersection were two whorehouses, one sported three to five women at any particular time, the other was for gay men, with two to four feminine men. The former was run by a large blond madame called Ms. Rose, the latter was run by a clearly effeminate man, called Uncle Bernard. Both Ms. Rose and Uncle Bernard were reputed to have

shot and killed people. Both of them served as the cooks for their respective whorehouses, sometimes serving food to the residents and patrons, alike. There was always something of a good natured competition between Ms. Rose and Uncle Bernard, about who was the better cook. For a free meal, sometimes I'd help Ms. Rose shell peas, on her back porch, and once for my efforts I was granted my choice. I enjoyed the company of a rather large heavy set woman, simply because she was so sincerely happy when we started having sex, but then she'd transform into a wild passionate unrecognizable creature.

Late that night, when dropping off those two heavy newspaper bundles, the populated intersection was abuzz with all kinds of popular activity. The club *Idel's* was serving drinks hand-over-fist, and keeping the surrounding streets awash in the sounds of jazz, R&B, and soul. Inside the smoky club, a tall sexy black diva was doing a fair job at belting-out Gladys Knight's, *Best Thing that Ever Happened to Me*. The beautiful singer in *Idel's* looked better than she sang, causing all the women to bitch and moan about the quality of her singing, which in turn, made it nearly impossible for the men to keep their eyes off her. I've

always wondered why it's so hard for people to ignore jealousy. Earlier that evening, I'd stepped inside the club, for a listen, and a quick shot of bourbon, and indeed it had been hard to drag my eyes off the stage. The song's title made me think of Evangeline, but so did many things, especially if it was ethnically brown or black, beautiful, and female.

All things considered, the folks in my newspaper district were kind to me. Those who disliked white people politely ignored me. They were accustomed to seeing me helping the paperboys, so I never had the slightest problem. Avoiding conflict was all about realizing the simple fact that respect was a two-way street. Admittedly, sometimes I had to give a little more than I got, but after all, I was in their territory. As today, the blacks were dirt poor in my newspaper district, and it was their race, which my race had once enslaved, and though the emancipation proclamation had been written, thanks to things like Jim Crow, the ill-treatment was yet continuing. If you're white, take just two minutes to reverse the situation, to actually conceptualize what slavery must have been like, and just imagine that it was the black people, who had once enslaved your white ancestors, and they still call you n____r, just because

you're white. Imagine that many of today's black people obviously enjoy using the demeaning word, since most of them desperately desire to criticize and keep your white race down. On the other hand, I now believe the what's keeping black down the most is welfare.

It seems to me that generally black people read more into facial expressions, body language, and how you say things, than do most whites; especially more than most of Mobile's older white southern males. Many rednecks focus on the literal meaning of the phrase. Hence, I tried to remain cognizant of this fact, when communicating with those of the darker race. Also my black paperboys had put the word-out, that I was okay, and a guy to be trusted. Even though I was adept at telling a lie, and fairly good at dealing drugs, I was none the less to be trusted. The paperboys were indeed right to trust me, for I sincerely admired and loved them. That's another thing about blacks; it's been my experience, that blacks tend to give more ear to what their children say, rather than randomly dismissing them, just because they're young, and lacking in life experience.

It was a jet-black moonless night, with only a few visible stars, no moon, no clouds, when I was

dropping-off the two weighty newspaper bundles. The sun was still a couple hours away, roughly two thousand miles below the horizon. As I bent down, setting the heavy newspaper bundles on the sidewalk, I looked-up and realized that I was directly in front of two of Mobile's better-known, well-dressed, heroin and cocaine dealers. Both men, with arms folded, were lazily propped-up with their backs against the nightclub's exterior brick wall, just as Shades had been that fateful scary afternoon right before we went to the trap house. Back then, drugs had a lot of different names, but frequently in the black community, heroin was referred to as 'boy,' and cocaine's moniker was, 'girl.' I've also heard the reverse, I've never known the genesis of these diminutive drug handles, but no doubt their genesis is somewhere on the internet, and certainly those drugs have a myriad of other nicknames.

Perchance, those two names might have come from the fact that more males preferred heroin, and females cocaine, but certainly there were and are many addicts of both sexes, who preferred the reverse, if not indulged in both drugs. Maybe heroin is 'boy' since it sort of has the name 'Ron' in it. One way or another, everyone picks their own poison,

figures-out their own weaknesses, but too often not until it's too late, and addiction has sunk in its' icy fingers. The most commonly used potions of the professional world include: the zillion types of *Starbuck's* coffee, *Red Bull*, *Monster*, the various mind-blowing pre-workout drinks, chai tea, green and black teas, wines, beers, caffeinated colas, liquors, and the many of prescribed psychotropic pharmaceuticals. Foolishly, I've tended to opt for situational adrenaline, as induced by my cowardly paranoia, from jumping out of planes, the occasional alcoholic buzz, and one or two cups of coffee per day. I've tried many other drugs, but always feared addiction, or just got too tired of being stupid, as was the case with marijuana.

The taller of the two dapper dealers, leaning against *Idel's* wall, was also a well-known pimp called, Gentleman Pete, a lanky six foot five inch, medium brown skinned man, known for disciplining his girls by whipping them with a wire coat-hanger or an extension cord, which often left pigmented scars on their legs and butt cheeks. Pete would only whip them, if they broke the pimp rules, but Pete had a long list of rules. A small percentage of overly submissive women seem to be addicted to such

exploitation. Very likely such prostitutes are psychiatrically similar to the women, who send love mail to serial killers on death row. For various reasons, those types of females may frequently have a poor self image, but a powerful sex drive.

Though a pimp, Pete dressed in a conventional dark reddish brown business suit, with thin gold pin strips. Still, he wore an expensive pleated deep burgundy shirt, kept his head smoothly shaved and brilliantly shiny, and wore plenty of gold: around his neck, one superior central incisor, watch, rings, shirt studs, as well as customized old-fashioned solid gold cuff links made out of five dollar gold pieces. He always enjoyed telling people that he had to have a French seamstress enlarge the buttonholes on his long-sleeved shirt cuffs to accommodate the weighty coins, symbols of a bygone era, when citizens actually owned a part of the country's wealth... gold. Now, five dollars is only a piece of paper, or worse yet, an electromagnetic symbol in some data bank. The paper and electronic symbols still can be used to purchase, but exactly how long that will last, seems uncertain.

The other drug dealer was a shorter and more heavily built guy nick-named, 'Blue.' He was a

powerful no-neck bulldog of a man, who often looked a bit insane, with more muscles than Mike Tyson. His face usually appeared to be either questioning or unjustly annoyed, but never relaxed, and far from psychologically normal. Blue generally acted as if, whatever you'd said had either confused him, or made him angry. That shorter more muscular dealer was around five ten. Blue's skin was so dark it gave off a bluish-black hue, hence his nickname. On the other hand, his mother said that she had given him his nickname, since supposedly he'd come out of the womb looking bluish black. Incongruently, his lips were light pink, and it wasn't owing to Vitiligo, but simply due to a natural lack of pigment. The lips seemed creepy, but of course, I never told him so.

Blue's mother wasn't built much differently than was her powerful son, and in some ways she was more intimidating, for she wasn't crazy, but in fact highly intelligent. She possessed something of a profoundly evil streak, a rare black female, who been diagnosed as a psychopath, and she believed me to be one, as well. Her husband, Blue's father, was born in Mobile. She said that he had supposedly left, without telling her when or where he was going, and didn't even tell his friends. Blue's mom was rumored

to have been cheating on her husband with a cajun fishing boat captain, who'd spent much of his life in Kilby, a maximum security prison hidden away in the middle of the state. Most of the population of the small town worked at the prison. The captain only hired fellow cons to work with him. Baring a crematorium, there's not much better place to hide a body than one hundred miles on the bottom of the Gulf of Mexico, especially considering the shark population. Blue's scary drunk mom once told me that you cut the body into six pieces, and just chummed the water. When the pallbearers arrived, you dumped-in the six pieces, with about a minute separation between each piece; ergo, I assumed that was what her boyfriend had possibly done to her murdered husband.

Ever notice that on Mother's Day for NFL teams, when the players bring their mothers to the televised team party, often the big heavy-duty linemen and their mothers have similar builds? Maybe, some portion of raw physical power somehow involves the X chromosome. Such as the case with Blue and his psychopathic mom. Oddly enough, Blue's mom was seriously delighted that her son was a successful drug dealer, for in the world of Jim Crow, and the

associated marked economic strife, almost any form of financial success is to be admired, be it legal or otherwise.

Likewise, during America's great depression, your poor and average white people very much admired the legendary gangsters, bootleggers, and bank robbers. Such historical criminals became the heroes of many poverty stricken white Americans. In fact, frequently Americans would welcome them into their homes, to feed them, give them a place to lay their heads, and often lie to the police on their behalf. All the while, the homeowners knew that those criminals had killed police.

When the government allows the banks to steal people's funds, people lose respect for the law. Imagine that. Remember when President Bush Jr. signed the historic \$700 billion bailout for the 'financial services industry (The banksters),' while promising to move swiftly to unlock frozen credit markets, supposedly to get the economy moving again?

"It's complicated, and we're going to make sure whatever we do is done in a deliberative fashion..." I just love that word... deliberative. It almost gives the impression that it's moral and good. The ever humble George Bush told reporters, claiming that the giant

grant was essential to help our economy, making the rich richer and the poor poorer. But despite this misuse of America's wealth, George is a devout Christian. The worst thing about that pilferage was that 99 percent of Americans believed him, a testament to the fact that American's are 18th in education.

Blue had taken his colorful moniker to heart, so when he went clubbing, he frequently wore various shades of blue: hats, suits, shirts, socks, suede shoes, and ties. The night I was dropping-off the two newspaper bundles, he had on a dark blue porkpie hat, as well as a dark blue knee-length sport jacket, matching pants, with a light blue shirt and soft blue suede shoes. Blue's massive shark jaw was so wide that the angles almost exceeded the width of the hat's narrow brim, and his neck was much wider than his cranium, making his hat seem clownishly small. His teeth were bright white and seemingly large enough for a tiger, giving him a menacing smile. The array of bright glittering gold rings and chains were starkly set-off by his blue-black skin.

Occasionally, if you looked Blue directly in his face, he'd repeatedly look away, but then suddenly his head would swivel back around, and he'd look hard, right at you, but with a threatening sneer, that I do believe he couldn't control. When he did that, I always wondered, if he'd gone slightly psychotic. I'd just smile back at him, and think about the fact that I could out run him, then I'd nonchalantly say, "How are things doing?"

Even with all his bizarre looks and nefarious deeds, Blue possessed a unique type of nobility, but like a man who'd stolen the throne by murdering the king. Sort of like how the Republican Bush stole the 2000 election from Gore, with that crooked Florida vote count. If the republican Trump beats democratic Hillary, it will probably be another stolen election. The republicans are only for a few extremely rich folks, so they can't easily win unless they cheat. It's sort of like how some countries might kill another country's leader, set-up their own puppets to run the place, to continue bleeding off that country's: oil, opium, treasury wealth, gold mines, etc. On the other hand, the democrats are always convincing the poor that they care about them, yet all they really do is cripple the poor with welfare and handouts, instead of creating decent jobs and self pride. Neither party seriously attempts to make medicine and education free. We need to stop destroying poor people's incentive to work. Welfare should be configured so that it encourages work, and a minimum wage job, worked forty hours a week, should allow a family of three to live a decent life. Not the democrats, and certainly not the republicans, want that to happen.

Uncharacteristically that night, Blue seemed relaxed and loose, or perchance he was a little drunk. It was always hard to judge Blue's mood. Until that moment, I'd never seen the two drug dealers together. Since they were both in the same trade, I'd

assumed they were adversaries, but right then, they seemed okay with each other. While I openly didn't approve of the dealing of heroin or cocaine, the dealers seemed to like me, and for survival's sake, I remained overly cordial toward them.

Having put down the two heavy paper bundles, I politely nodded to the two men. They returned my nod by simply elevating their chins. White and Asian males usually nod, by dropping their chin, and bobbing their head a couple of times, while black males tended to elevate their chins, just once. I was about to turn back around to return to my car, when I heard Pete's whispered comment to Blue.

"Yo, look up dee street, Blue! Sheee-it! Here comes that motherfuck'n lying-ass Rocketman in that motherfuck'n fancy ass black ride ah his! You know, who be own'n that pretty car! (obvious answer was the police)" Pete gestured indicating a car, coming toward us, almost one block north on *De Heller Street*.

Glancing up at the two dapper drug dealers, I saw that they were both gazing north up the street, while they were pulling out huge automatic pistols from beneath their tailored suit jackets. The pistols looked like cannons from my close-up perspective. Judging from the bore of the muzzles, I'd say they

were .45s. In those days, a lot of drug dealers preferred the .45 automatic, then for some unknown reason, that preference would later change to the less powerful smaller nine millimeter parabellum. The difference in the lethality of the two weapons is significant, with the .45, also having more knockdown power. It's probably a more deadly round, although the 9 mm has more velocity, and less recoil (kick). If a drug dealer is arrested, who has a gun on his person, automatically the jury assumes that the dealer was willing to kill a cop. However, more often than not, that's not really true. The dealer carries the weapon largely, because plenty of people are willing to shoot them, just to take their drugs or cash. Some people feel that drug dealers should be considered as fair game.

Shockingly, Bulldog Blue had a pistol in each hand, Gentleman Pete just one. They wouldn't have produced the guns unless they intended to use them. Both men looked fierce enough, without the guns, but with them, they seemed terminal. Their perspective target was whomever was driving a beautiful shiny black car, headed south, coming in our direction. I think it was parked almost block up the road and had just pulled out onto the road to

head our way. The car was only a few seconds from driving by our corner, and the driver would be within spitting distance. That's when it dawned on me, that I was clearly going to be positioned directly in the drug dealers' line of fire, and so I swiftly spun, sat down on the sidewalk, then laid back on the concrete, with my head propped-up on the thick protective paper bundles, and there was the added benefit of being able to better watch what was about to happen to the victim, who Pete had just called, Rocketman. None of the many surrounding black club goers, appeared to have noticed what was transpiring, but that would soon violently change, and leave my ears loudly ringing.

The dealers were standing directly behind and above me, and only focused at the approaching black mustang. As the car neared, suddenly I locked eyes with the driver, and got the surprise of my life! He was purposely slowing down looking directly at me, through his open passenger window. That's when I realized that the man, which the dealers had just referred to as, Rocketman, and who they were fixing to shoot, was none other than my nemesis from the trap house, Shades. I was about to get my revenge. No doubt, Shades had been parked up the street, and

had seen me dropping the newspaper bundles on the corner, and was looking for a little camaraderie, since I escaped the trap house that day, and he hadn't tried to stop me; moreover, he'd given me Black's name that day. And, for those two reasons he probably thought I should have forgiven him, and perhaps I should have, but right then I still hated him.

Even though he didn't have on his dark sunglasses on, there was no mistaking that it was my skinny nemesis Shades. Two of his bulbous tipped fingers, with the curved dark nails, of his right hand were extended upward, giving me the then popular peace sign. The symbol represented victory during WWII, but during the 1960s the antiwar activists extended the meaning to ending the war in Vietnam.

How weird is this? I'm about to watch Shades be gunned down, while he's flashing me the peace sign? Compared to white folks, blacks rarely presented the peace sign; back then, it was pretty much a white hippy kind of thing. Shades was staring so hard at me, that he literally hadn't noticed the two large and well armed drug dealers, sighting-in on him, only six feet behind me. *He's still smiling that fake lopsided smile, just like when I first saw him that day.* Perhaps,

some of the crowd on the sidewalk had blocked Shades view of the two deadly assassins, as he slowly drove-up, still continuing to stare directly at my face.

Wanting my pound of flesh, I purposely held his gaze and even returned his smile, to further distract him, to make him think that I had forgiven him, diverting his attention from the deadly threat right behind me, so that the dealers would be able to get a better shot. Clearly, my hate for Shades was strong. *I'm getting my revenge and don't have to lift a finger!* The delay I was giving Pete and Blue was providing them with the time they needed to take careful aim. In an odd way, my bluff, my fixated smiling stare, was controlling Shades' destiny, sealing his fate. To save him, all I would have had to do was to roll my eyes, or point to the two dealers behind me, but I didn't! *Shades is wondering, why I'm laying down on the sidewalk like this.* His friendly sneer and his flashing the peace sign seemed to be his attempt at an apology for my terrifying experience in the trap house. As he pulled to me, the car had nearly come to a complete stop.

The police informant Rocketman, aka, Shades, was driving a magnificent showroom quality 1965 shiny black, high-performance *Mustang* fastback. The

car's deep high-gloss finish was twinkling and sparkling with reflected pink neon lights, from above the entrance to *Idel's*. The undercover car had probably been confiscated from a drug dealer, somewhere else in the state. Police departments around the state frequently traded in confiscated autos, and every now and then, they'd take some hopped-up street rods and detail it with the standard police department paint scheme. There were high performance corvettes and camaros with Mobile Sheriff's Department painted on the sides. Although, the black mustang was strictly undercover. Shades had to be enjoying driving that beauty. The extra large cam was lugging with the deep burly groans, indicative of massive untapped horsepower. *The only way that he's allowed to use a car like that is to bust lots of people.* I then recalled my fear that day, when Shades had almost gotten me busted, ergo a tad of white hot hate washed through me, still I didn't allow it to alter the pleasantness of my return gaze. How I wanted to hold his attention, to make him think that I was buying into his fake smile and peace sign. The odd unexpected situation was something of a dream-like fantasy. It was as if God had set-up this bizarre situation, just for my enjoyment, for my moment of revenge. *Thank you, God.* Moreover, God

was allowing me not only to witness it, but to play a small, yet critical role by distracting Shades from his two killers. *This is like the little yellow Opel in Spain, but this time there won't be any guilt!* Admittedly, there was a slim possibility that Shades actually regretted what he'd done to me at the trap house that terrifying day, but most likely, with his extending to me the peace symbol, he was trying to better insure that I wasn't set on path of revenge, against him. After what I'd heard the two dealers just say, there was no doubt there were a lot of folks, who wanted to do him in. *Christ, when are Pete and Blue gonna start firing? They're taking forever!* Time had obviously begun to slow down. It was like being six years old, waiting for the fireworks to begin at the fourth of July. *What's taking them so long?* For three reasons, I wasn't about to warn Shades.

One powerful motive was that he'd screwed me with the cops, and I could have easily been shot in the back going over the back yard fence, trying to escape over the backyard fence. The second reason was that, had I not jumped through the window that day, I would have faced many miserable years in some horrible Alabama prison. The third reason, that I held his gaze, was that had I'd tried to warn him,

and the dealers remotely sensed I had, they might have lowered their aim and shot me, or hunted me down, later. After all, the dealers could plainly see I was Shades' intended recipient of the conspiratorial peace sign, and they knew I dealt drugs, albeit not the hard ones they did. *I hope Pete and Blue don't think I'm Shades good buddy!* At that moment, their eyes and gun sights were trained on Shades. *Hurry-up and squeeze those triggers, guys!* It was obvious that Shades had somehow betrayed the two dapper drug dealers, so they were deadly serious about revenge. Gentleman Pete had called Shades, 'Rocketman,' and a few times before, I'd heard people talking about a snitch, named Rocketman, but I'd never imagined it was synonymous with Shades. Obviously, this was another large oversight on my part.

Shades had nearly stopped his car, with the passenger window about ten feet from to my shoes. Any second the three guns would open-up, issuing forth a deafening rain of hot lead, above my head. Drug dealers aren't typically famous for their marksmanship, and so I was praying that they wouldn't shoot too low. Unlike special ops guys, drug dealers spend participially no time, at the gun range.

Feeling the need to get down, as far below the

line of fire as possible, I suddenly slumped my head sideways, so that my right cheek was then touching the cool concrete. *Holy shit, this is going to be loud and dangerous!* Shades looked like he was about to say something to me, and was still extending the peace sign in the open passenger window, then he frowned, as if to say, “Why are you laying down on the ground, like that?”

The two shooters were roughly sixteen feet from their target. It was the ideal situation, in that I was obviously complicit, yet without being the slightest bit legally culpable. *I couldn't have asked for a better form of revenge.* My final gesture to Shades was that I slightly raised and jutted-out my chin, the aforementioned black form of nodding, as an acknowledgement, and my last piece of delaying subterfuge, my gesture to send him off to hell, and it happened just as the dealers opened fire!

In near perfect unison, all three guns exploded into action. Instantly, my ears began loudly ringing. As a child, I'd learned to keep both eyes open when a weapon fired, and so I saw two quarter-sized holes appear high on the passenger door, just beneath the passenger window, and I could heard the sound of falling shattered glass inside the car door. Shades

yanked the peace sign away from the door, as if it door had stung him. *Was he hit?* Simultaneously, screams erupted from the nearby women, and Shades' face instantly registered extreme shock! *He never saw this coming.* Immediately, Shades' brain sent a lightning fast signal to his right foot, and he stomped the gas pedal, as if it was a mammoth cockroach was trying to escape, under one of his mother's kitchen cabinets!

In response, both the rear tires violently screamed and acrid blue smoke bellowed forth. *That car has power and positive traction.* The shiny rear chrome spoked wheels turned into a sparkling reflective blur, with the pink neon lights from *Idel's* causing them twinkle, while the street began to fogged-up, with the choking tire smoke. Women continued screaming, as the gunfire persisted. The car had morphed into a roaring vibrating black beast, but all that tire spinning meant loss of traction, which provided the dealers an extra second or two of target time, and so they kept-on blasting away, while I stayed pasted flat onto the concrete, with the top of my skull firmly pressed into the paper bundle, and my right cheek stuck to the pavement, while my eyes tracked the target, Shades, aka, Rocketman, who was

then sitting bolt-upright, and was no longer leaning in my direction.

In the dark, I saw a bright spark came off the curb across the street, as a bullet then whined-down an adjoining alleyway. Another bullet blew the mirror off the passenger side of that beautiful black *Mustang*. Screams and curses could be heard coming from the fleeing club goers. Then, it looked like one of the bullets hit home, since it was clear that Shades violently jerked, and his thin body appeared to suddenly bounce off the steering wheel. Still, his right foot remained pressed on the gas pedal. *Wonder how bad he's hurt?* Realizing that he'd been shot, my hatred and desire for revenge vanished. *Wonder if he'll live?*

As the tires fought for traction on the asphalt, against too much panic and excessively applied horsepower, the muscle car developed a major swerve. *Shades is out of his depth as a driver, and this car needs wider tires.* The rear end of the muscle car swung to the right, toward me, but by then he'd barely passed me, so I was in no danger from the car. Correspondingly, the front of the car began to point to the left, toward a crowd running in various directions on the opposite side of the street. They

were all running and bumping into each other, trying to vacate the area. All the while, the three guns kept firing, but it was plain that most of the people couldn't figure out, where the shots were coming from, so they just ran.

For a fraction of a second, I realized that when the tires got hot and sticky enough to grab the asphalt, the car might leap across the narrow little street, clear the low curb, and plow straight through the crowd of panicked fleeing pedestrians. With the rear of the car swerving to the right, I momentarily lost sight of Shades. I wanted to sit-up to get a better view, but didn't want to risk getting shot in the back of the head. Most likely, Shades was still trying to work the wheel, steering in an attempt to counter the serve and maintain control, while chunks of hot lead hammered their way through the car's thin metal body, and whizzed past, and into, his reedy frame. The heavy metal slugs continued to loudly bang their way through the metal walls of the sparkling black muscle car. Shades probably didn't have a clue, who was shooting at him. Of all the twenty something shots that were fired, it sounded like roughly ten or twelve slugs went through the *Mustang's* body. The sounds were sort of like baseballs hitting a trash can,

only less of a ‘clang,’ and more of a ‘thud.’

You might say that the situation was a ‘reverse drive-by,’ or maybe it was just Shade’s karma finally catching-up to him, a promissory spiritual note reaching maturity, with the interest paid in fear and blood. The bullets slamming through the car body, again made me think of that day in Spain, when the old and the young La Guardia had shot the two poor Spanish teenagers in the little yellow car.

Wonder if Shades will end-up like the one-eyed guy in the yellow Opel? As the tires found firm traction, and got a little further from me, I again saw Shades violently jerk, though I’m not too sure it was a second bullet hitting him, yet it probably was. To this day, I don’t know what happened to Shades. I wondered who was more frightened... me in the trap house, or Shades in the beautiful *Mustang*, being used for target practice for Gentleman Pete and Bulldog Blue, but since he was probably severely wounded and possibly later died, I voted for Shades.

Once straightened out and headed south, the *Mustang* accelerated at a truly impressive rate. When the shooting stopped, I’d rolled over and sat-up, to watch the car leave. The beautiful car disappeared, hurtling down DeHeller Street. *It’s got to be a 427,*

with two fours. Gentleman Pete yelled a long list of expletives, but Bulldog Blue remained silent. Needless to say, the dealers were pissed that Shades had gotten away. It was the last I, and the city of Mobile, would see of Shades, aka Rocketman. If he'd survived the shooting, and I had my doubts, the police probably moved him to another Alabama City, and continued to use him as an informant, there was no telling how many people in Mobile he gotten busted.

The two dealers quickly put their spent weapons, back under their suit coats, turned and rather athletically sprinted-off in opposite directions. But for one-second, before sprinting away, Blue gave me a questioning look, followed by the elevated chin gesture, as a form of thanks. Perhaps, he'd picked-up on the fact that I was delaying Shades, giving the dealers time to take aim. But that gesture also meant Blue knew there was something between Shades and I, which I later had to explain, for fear Blue might think that Shades and I were allies. I hated explaining the situation to Blue, because the story about the trap house made me look rather foolish. Nevertheless, Blue was not someone, you wanted suspecting that you might be a narc. He loved

hearing about my fear in the trap house and under the couples little home. He laughed long and hard, then asked me to tell it again, since he thoroughly enjoyed the story. Unlike, many people, Blue was a good listener.

Miraculously, no bystander appeared to have been hit by the powerful screaming mustang, nor by the multitude of flying bullets, most likely since a lot of the lead had found the car body, if not Shades. It was unlikely that any one had told the police, that it had been the two notorious drug dealers, who'd fired all the shots. Besides, I don't think many of the people took the time to try to see, who was actually doing the shooting. The men and women on the street that night just ducked and sprinted. Car doors were slamming, engines were firing-up, and everyone was just fleeing the gunfire.

Typically, pimps and dealers of hard narcotics were not to be informed on. No one in their right mind would want to be known for spilling the beans on a hardcore dealer, in Mobile. Even if a drug dealer was locked away in jail or prison, he had dangerous friends and family members on the outside, who would carry-out their revenge. Blue was reputed to have killed a wealthy black man, by using the

victim's own golf putter, because the rich guy was about to testify, against Blue's idiot brother, who'd broken into the rich man's three-story beach house to steal whatever was worth stealing. The multimillion dollar mansion later floated out about thirty feet into the Gulf, during a hurricane, and as unbelievable as it may seem, the insurance company refused to pay-off.

Blue knew that the homeowner liked to play golf by himself, in the evening, when the air was cooler, and he usually finished-up the ninth hole, just before sundown. Then, he'd go to the clubhouse for a martini. So Blue waited in his car on a rarely used service road, adjacent to the eighth green. When the homeowner took-out his putter, Blue walked out onto the green, waving as he approached, as if he was a friend. After Blue looked around to make sure that no one was watching, he told the golfer that he, Blue, was the first black member of the club, and held out his hand to introduce himself. When the golfer reached to shake his hand, Blue used the moment to snatch the putter, and beat him to death with it. He then wiped the brass-headed putter, on the grass and on the dead man's shirt, to get the blood off it, and since it was a murder weapon, Blue later threw the

putter into the bay. The world's hardest skull is no match for a heavy brass golf putter, especially when it's wheeled by a powerfully built psychopath.

Finally, standing-up off the sidewalk and giving Bulldog Blue a small return nod, I just watched the show of humanity screaming and running for their lives. In less than one minute, I was sitting alone on top of one of my two newspaper bundles. The streets were abandoned and silent, then I heard the club's doors being slammed and locked for the night. There were about twenty something brass shell casings scattered on the sidewalk, which might have had the dealer's fingerprints on them. Since no one was around and people didn't use cellphone cameras then, I quickly pocketed the brass, and for old times sake, and later threw them down a storm drain about twenty blocks away, having first used my shirt tail to make sure that my prints weren't on them. If you've read the first chapter of the first of these fictional books, you probably know exactly which storm drain, I'm referring to. Since Pete and Blue had done me something of a favor, throwing away their shell casing, seemed the least I could do. Still, I don't think the police visited the crime scene that night.

Savoring the moment, I was in no hurry to leave,

since I was white, unarmed, and had no dope on me, and was just doing my job by delivering the newspaper bundles, so I had no reason to fear the police. On the other hand, you didn't want to be black and interrogated in one of those back rooms of the Mobile police station; especially, if it involved the shooting of a police informant. Frankly, the police didn't want any black person to carry a weapon, regardless of whether it was for self-defense. Of course, Pete and Blue weren't defending themselves. However, by then, there was one black cop on the force, and he carried a sidearm, but he was the biggest Uncle Tom ever born. Even though he worked for 'the man,' he was popular with the better looking black women.

The club had emptied-out in seconds flat. Not a soul remained. The music had stopped and only the street lights and the pink neon sign remained on. Everyone figured the gunshots would bring the law, so in less than a minute the intersection was silent... no voices, no cars, and no music. Not even the owners remained. Most of the patrons had exited out the back door, the side of the building which was furthest away from the shooting. If the windows had been boarded-up, you'd would have thought a

hurricane was coming. All I could hear was the ringing of my ears, but I could still smell the harsh burned rubber from the tires, the burned cordite, and occasionally the salty air from the gulf. For a few seconds, I savored the moment, before getting in my old *Ford*, and driving toward the distant aforementioned storm drain.

Afterwards, I drove-off to help my paperboys finish the morning deliveries. The shooting had given me a great story to tell them. How they loved hearing it, asking me to recount the story, over and over. Oddly enough, they found the fact that Blue had two guns to be particularly exciting. They also wanted to believe that two of the bullets had found their intended target in Shades. In poverty stricken communities, people who work for the police are looked on with a monumental disdain, or pity. In addition, the paperboys found the fact that I had laid on the sidewalk, throughout the shooting, to be hilarious. They repeatedly asked me if I was scared. Each time, I'd say, 'hell yes,' and they'd laugh.

Unfortunately, in order for me to fully explain the story to my paperboys, I also had to explain my drug-related association with Shades and Black, as well as the scary day at the trap house. How they

loved that story! Still, I left out the other dealers, who worked for me. On learning about my drug dealing, the paperboys didn't bat an eye, and didn't pass one nanogram of judgement. My description of how frightened I was, and how shocked Shades had looked in the black muscle car made them laugh. I loved their laughter, and my paperboys did so love to laugh. Their laughter filled me with a rare joy. Now, forty years later, I live for the laughter of my lovely girl child. Of course, she's now an adult, but for me, she'll always be my baby... how I miss that small girl. I miss her calling me 'daddy.' When she turn thirteen, she switched to 'dad,' a potent sorrow.

The paperboys became my temporary family of sorts. It's so nice not to be judged. For obvious reasons, I elected not to tell my friends or biological family about my drug dealing and that shooting; for then, I most certainly would have been judged. At my request, the paperboys kept everything secret. The next day, the newspaper simply said that shots had been reported to have been fired somewhere in the vicinity of DeHeller and Velmont streets, but that no one was injured, and that the police were investigating. Of course, nothing came of said investigation, since it had happened in an all black

section of Mobile, and Shades was a black police informant; no doubt, with a five star criminal record.

Blue later described to me in detail, the list of roughly fifteen drug dealers Shades had gotten busted. The list, which he'd gotten from a dirty cop, included Bulldog Blue, himself, who was then out on bail. During the following week, I found out that several other dealers in Mobile also referred to Shades, as Rocketman. Maybe the nickname had something to do with the celebrated Elton John song, since the lyrics somewhat described Shades' situation. Not surprisingly, in those days, lots of Blacks listened to Elton's music, as well as to other white rock and roll artists, though few whites listened to black music.

...And I think its gonna be a long long time

Till touch down brings me round again to find

I'm not the man they think I am at home

Oh no, no, no I'm a rocket man

Rocket man burning out his fuse up here alone...

-from the song *Rocket Man* by Sir Elton

John

My notorious dealer, Black, who had pointed me out to the police and the malicious snitch, Rocketman, aka Shades, had very nearly destroyed my life. Black never again attempted to approach me, nor did I ever speak with him. Nevertheless, there was to be one more planned near fatal interaction with Black. Most likely, Black was still in Mobile, so he remained a worrisome concern for me, as he may have suspected I was for him. My revenge on Black wouldn't be long in coming, and though nearly lethal, it still seems humorous and deeply satisfying.

Why the cops had Black set me up with Shades, was probably due to the fact that I never let Black know, when I was bringing him his next drug shipment. For safety's sake, each visit I paid to Black was always unplanned, and when I first established that Black was alone and busy doing his chores: grave digging, applying weed killer, mowing, etc. Whenever I did show-up to resupply Black and collect my money, the transaction of money and dope was always done in a period of less than sixty-seconds. Black never had the time to call the police, before I'd be long gone. All Black knew was what my car and I looked like, and he'd probably only seen

one of my temporary stolen license plates. Yet somehow, Black had been able to point me out to the police and Shades. How that transpired, I'll never know, but there's a good chance that he'd seen me helping the paperboys, and figured-out that I worked as a district manager for the *Mobile Register*, and so it was relatively easy to find me and point me out to the police and Shades, aka, Rocketman. As mentioned, I'd meant Shades on the corner of one of my paper drops, and it was a given that I would drive by said corner several times each day, as part of my regular on-the-job duties.

One week after the trap house, I'd asked my paperboys to help me locate the traitorous Black; they all knew him because of his grave digging job, since the Jewish graveyard was in my district. The hyper vigilant little group quickly came through. They not only found out Black's new residence, but better yet, the paperboys discovered another highly useful tidbit, concerning his love life, which ultimately provided me my well deserved revenge. Black had always been a major player, with the ladies. It just so happened that Black was furtively spending his evenings with the lovely petite girlfriend of an extremely huge, and immensely

dangerous man, who worked nights at the loading dock of the downtown newspaper.

Jerome was six foot seven inches, with ashy coal black skin, and was massive as Mount Everest. Moreover, he was every bit as cold, and unforgiving as he was powerful. The towering black titan was constructed of nothing but rock hard muscle and bone. Not a gram of fat graced Jerome's immense 260 pound frame. Every night, from 10:30 p.m. to 6:30 a.m., with his over developed physique, the giant Jerome lifted and placed thousands of heavy newspaper bundles into shiny metal loading chutes, delivery vans and trucks, as well as onto conveyor belts. He'd been hired based solely on his size and strength, and he didn't know the meaning of the word, 'steroid.' He was all natural.

The newspaper company had overlooked a violent criminal record, since Jerome had solemnly promised to control his bad temper, and he did the work of four or five men. The colossus was nothing short of a living breathing lethal weapon. Loading thirty to seventy pound, paper bundles every night, seven day a week, had built-up Jerome's brawn to freakish proportions. No doubt the giant was genetically endowed with an ocean of testosterone.

Most of the people, who worked on the loading dock, avoided Jerome, since it was easy to tell he was less than sociable.

Somewhere, I once read that the medial hypothalamus and periaqueductal gray in the brain are the most important structures in mediating rage, and the perifornical lateral nucleus in the hypothalamus clearly moderates 'attacking behavior.' The hippocampus, amygdala, part of the stria terminalis, some of the *Septal* area, cingulate gyrus, and prefrontal cortex project to said structures, and so may act to attenuate or control the expression of rage. Certainly these former structures are immensely effective at unleashing anger; whereas, the latter structures may dampen or control that rage. Most likely Jerome had plenty of the former and little of the latter. The only persons, Jerome was known to defer to, was his mother, and his unfaithful though lovely girlfriend, who unbeknownst to Jerome was having sex with Black.

Where my former dealer, Black, was a highly intelligent man, giant Jerome was cognitively slow as *Grandma's molasses* at Christmas in the Yukon; yet if provoked, the giant Jerome was more aggressive than a kicked hornet's nest. In personality, Jerome

made a rabid badger seem like a baby rabbit. Where big and powerful men are often gentle and kind, the giant Jerome was the exception to the rule. He plainly possessed a violent scrunch of unpleasant neurons buried deep in his doltish gray mush, and didn't care to indulge in friendly interactions. The man had a disconcerting way of pulling his closed lips way over to the right side of his face, when someone spoke to him, as if to say, "Hurry up and finish your damn talking."

Jerome had an aged grandmother, who also was notoriously mean. She was reputed to have poisoned her own sister, in a botched attempt to collect on a life insurance policy. Her strategy was simple... rat poison in a cold quart of beer. Every afternoon, she'd bring her sister a quart of ice cold *Budweiser*, laced with a small amount of rat poison. Over time, the poison began to accumulate in the tissues, slowly weakening the unknowing sister. The evil grandmother would purchase the beer, go out into the car, open the beer take a couple of swigs, put in the poison, and head to her sister's house. The sister would always be sitting on the front porch, so as Jerome's grandmother got out of the car, she'd pretend to be opening the beer, and fake taking a

couple a swallows, convincing the poor sister that the beer was okay to drink. The unfortunate sister, whose hair had begun falling out due to the poison, barely managed to live, but ended-up with a permanently damaged thyroid gland, and the undeserved blessing of hypothyroidism. She also had periodic TIAs (transient ischemic attacks), and a seemingly minor amount of brain damage, yet once off the poison, her hair grew back.

Jerome's coworkers appreciated his exceptional ability for hard physical labor, but wisely avoided engaging him in unnecessary dialogue; but then, neither did Jerome seek their company. He just didn't like people, except for his sexy little girlfriend. She was the only bit of sweetness in menacing Jerome's mundane angry existence. Liz was a tiny alluring though highly mischievous, slightly chubby, and highly sexual lovely cherub. She was a five foot tall mixed race young woman, with a face like an angel, posted just above a fully developed gorgeous figure. Yet, her voice was almost childlike, even a little cartoonish; still, it was soft, not harsh or whiny. Her skin was a smooth buttery caramel, and her natural light brown hair fell about her face in long curving natural tight waves and ringlets. She was

very likely the delicious embodiment of Jerome's finest wet dreams. While I was never lucky enough to dream about her, it didn't stop me from imagining.

Sexy Liz was by no means a timid girl, and clearly enjoyed extremely masculine men, and was totally unfamiliar with the concept of fidelity. Her motto should have been, 'so many men, so little time.' While most of black Mobile knew about her extra-curricular activities, the feral giant Jerome was entirely unaware of Liz's lack of faithfulness. No one wanted to be the messenger, who clued him in. Certainly, no one in their right mind considered telling Jerome. That marvelous rumor about Black and Liz, which my paperboys passed on to me, was the missing part to my puzzle, and ever so convenient.

The gossip was that each night, while big Jerome was busy loading countless heavy bundles of newspaper at the downtown loading dock, my former traitorous drug dealer, Black, was busy in bed with Jerome's beautiful chewy caramel dream. And to make matters more interesting, this covert affair was being conducted on Jerome's bed and inside a house, which Jerome's hard labor paid for. That savory bit of information proved to be the ultimate answer to

my prayers for my just retribution against Black's having handed me over to Shades, and the Mobile police.

Since I often had to drive to the downtown loading dock to pick-up extra newspaper bundles, I'd frequently seen giant Jerome, and had quickly come to realize that he was not a person to be taken lightly, and for safety's sake, he was best avoided. Other employees had advised me against engaging him in conversation, so I'd never actually spoken with the surly monster. He wasn't racially prejudice, but just hated people, regardless of race.

Sometimes, while I was loading a few bundles into my car trunk, I'd just watch him, and marvel at how he could make an underhanded toss of a sixty or seventy pound paper bundle of the extra thick Sunday papers, much as another fellow might toss a softball. The black god never smiled, but invariably seemed to grimace, as if he was constantly suffering from some hidden pain. His irate facial expressions, coupled with his massive strength, told me that he was a serious character.

It only took a minute to figure-out how to safely pass on this unfaithful sexual tidbit to the unsuspecting giant, concerning the traitorous Black

and the lovely caramel cherub Liz. The transfer of that information had to be done, with perfect timing, so that I was never suspected of having spilled the beans, for there was a bit of a chance Black wouldn't survive the encounter with Jerome, much as that day at the trap house there was the chance that I could have been shot, while jumping over the back fence.

If you prick us do we not bleed? If you tickle us do we not laugh? If you poison us do we not die? And if you wrong us shall we not revenge?

(Act III, scene I) *The Merchant of Venice* by William Shakespeare

Around 1:30 a.m., Tony, the same paperboy, who'd burned all the paper bundles in the neighboring district, and I, sat side by side on swings in the park. We were sitting in the dark, in the middle of a public park, directly across the street from Liz and Jerome's happy little abode. We just sat in our respective swings and talked. After a few minutes, Tony produced a doobie, fired it up, and I was happy to share, for by then, the paperboys knew all about my drug dealing, and they all smoked weed. We couldn't actually swing, because the chains

emitted loud metal screeching sounds, where they joined onto the rusty supporting d-rings of the overhead cross-pipe. When the roach was roasted, we were fairly baked, and that forced us to momentarily leave the park, to go buy a big box of chocolate chip cookies, and a couple of ice cold cokes, then quickly return, to continue our surveillance of Jerome and Liz's home, again sitting in the swings. The night was overcast and dark. Hence, Tony and I were essentially invisible sitting in the middle of the unlit city park.

Liz had left the frosty yellow bulb porch light burning. Being thoroughly stoned, and energized by the caffeinated cola and the chocolate cookies, I contemplated the absurd idea of knocking on Liz's door, and when she answered, telling her that Black had sent me as his stand-in, to provide her with sex for the evening. Since Liz was something of a nympho, that might actually have worked; at least, until Black arrived, and then the manure would have hit the high speed fan. Stoned on the ass-kicking weed provided by Tony, my imagination had momentarily taken flight; however, being accompanied by my young paperboy, I switched my line of thinking, and stayed focused on the mission;

besides, I didn't want to get crosswise with the surly giant, Jerome; that was a horrifying thought, indeed.

After waiting for nearly an hour, Tony and I were about to abandon hope of Black showing-up, but then true to the rumor, a light yellow *Ford Falcon*, drove slowly passed Liz's warm yellow light, then the car rounded the nearby corner, and stopped, as indicated by the crimson brake lights, reflecting off the white corner house. A moment later, the sound of the engine switched off, a car door softly clicked closed, and Black came strutting back up the sidewalk, with a prideful pronounced bounce in his right hip, headed toward Jerome's humble residence, and the captivating light yellowish brown delight waiting inside. Black didn't bother to knock, but opened the door, briefly looked back outside the door, stepped inside, and closed the door. *Hallelujah!*

With the closing of the front door, Tony and I sprinted two blocks to my car, jumped in, hit the gas, and sped to the newspaper loading dock, only three minutes away, where the ill-tempered ebony giant was hard at work, earning the next month's rent on the little house, with the frosty yellow porch light. The same house that my former dealer, Black, was then enjoying. We parked a block away from the

downtown newspaper building, got out, and ran to the rear loading area. Hide in some bushes and looking through the loading ports, where it was easy to see the workers inside the brightly lit interior. Having spotted Jerome, little Tony hurriedly ducked into the loading room, looking down to obscure his face, with my twice folded and painstakingly prepared note in his hand. In lieu of the possibility of Black being murdered, and the note being examined, I'd printed it with my non-dominated hand, and left no prints on it, and I had shown Tony how to hold the neatly folded sheet of paper, between two knuckles to avoid leaving fingerprints.

“Whatever you do, don't let Jerome get a good look at your face, Tony. Just keep looking down the entire time, you are inside, push the note into his palm, and then turn around and get the fuck out of there, before he can talk to you. There aren't any cameras in there so we don't have to worry about you being filmed. Remember, use your two knuckles, so you don't leave fingerprints, and don't say anything. As soon as Jerome takes the note, just leave... fast!” Those were my instructions.

Stark honesty can often be more cruel than lies and

deceit!

Shades of Truth by Bill A. Morrissey

With note in hand, Tony darted inside, walked through the light filled room, flooded with the sounds generated by the huge motors, rotating the huge printing drums. The small boy lightly touched the giant's back, causing him to turn around. Tony kept looking down and quickly placed the note into the giant's big paw, and before he could look at who'd just given him the note, Tony was back out the door, into the dark, and headed toward my concealed location, across the street in the dark behind some dark green oleander bushes. The note was nothing short of a literary masterpiece. Tony and I had painstakingly crafted it, rewriting it a couple of times.

“Jerome you be so stupid. This man named ‘BLACK’ be fuck’n yo Liz every nite, when you be work’n downtown at de paper, and he be fuck’n Liz, and she be like’n it. Really like’n it! Go check it out. Everyone no bout Liz fuck’n Black. You pay the rent, and Black be the man. Just go look, now, stupid. Black be fuck’n Liz right now, in your house. Right now, stupid! Ha Ha! Yes, right now, you big dummy! Black says you be a punk. He say he can kick your stupid ass, anytime. He be sex’n Liz right now.”

Tony was back out of the building and hidden in the dark with me, behind the bushes, while the big guy was still unfolding the note. Jerome just stood there in the bright lights, squinting, studying the note. At first, I thought maybe he couldn't read, since he stood there for almost three solid minutes. *What's he doing?* Perhaps, the kush had messed with my time perception. Then suddenly, Jerome wadded-up the note, threw it to the floor, turned and walked directly outside into the back parking lot. With a less than cheerful expression, he climbed into his beat-up old *Buick*, which unfortunately just happened to be parked right next to where we were hiding in the bushes, and so for a second I thought he'd seen us, but luckily he hadn't, and he hurriedly climbed in his beat-up old rust bucket, and sped-away to his well used happy little home. Wisely, Tony darted back into the building, and furtively retrieved the unnoticed wadded-up note from the floor, which we then promptly destroyed. No point in leaving evidence, especially if Jerome happened to kill Black, and to my way of thinking, odds were about fifty-fifty on that happening.

Still high on Tony's whacky weed, I imagined that I was the US president, and had just pressed the

big red button, sitting on the White House *resolute* desk, launching an huge ICBM with a 100 megaton payload, in the form of Jerome. I could almost hear the deafening whistle as the massive black missile tore through the atmosphere, screaming just two miles across town, aimed at its deserving target, my former traitorous dealer, Black, the man who'd very nearly ruined my life. It was tempting not to drive back to the park and watch the detonation from the darkness of the park, but I didn't want to run any unnecessary risks, since there was an excellent chance that the cops and a homicide investigator, and maybe the medical examiner, would soon be coming.

Instead of watching the action, Tony and I drove to an all-night diner to eat and laugh, and laugh, and laugh, hysterical rib-aching laughter, for indeed my ribs did ache for days after. Still stoned, Tony and I kept pretending to be Jerome, and then at times, one of us would pretend to be the surprised terrified Black, who was still in bed with Liz, when Jerome opened the bedroom door. We'd sling dramatic phrases back and forth at each other. Kids can be so much fun. The two of us agreed that it was best that we didn't share this event with the other paperboys,

in lieu of the fact that Jerome lived in the neighborhood. Still, I wondered about Tony's ability to keep that secret; but as it turned-out, there was no need to worry. Besides, I was soon to leave Mobile, and not to return for thirteen years. Later that morning, we found out that Black had been carried away in an ambulance.

He spent two weeks in a hospital room. When he was finally released, he had a cast on his lower right leg and his right arm was in a sling, and half of his left ear had been sown back on. Jerome had tried to drag the badly beaten semiconscious Black out of the house by his ear, but a big piece of the ear tore free. Jerome had thrown the bloody piece of ear back at the still naked Liz, where the bloody tissue momentarily stuck to her left breast, causing Liz to scream, and use the back of her nails to flint away the piece of ear. The scream alerted the neighbors, but no one wanted to be the one who had called the police on Jerome. One of my paperboy's aunts was friends with Liz, and had later gotten all the juicy details, first hand. Black was bleeding and vomiting on the sidewalk in front of the little house, when one of the neighbors took him in his house, to protect him from any further beating. Jerome had

momentarily gone back in the house to yell at Liz, but Liz was still freak'n about the ear, so Jerome just stood there blinking, trying to figure-out what to say.

Petite unfaithful Liz remained physically untouched, but she was no doubt enthralled. As I'd expected, monstrous Jerome didn't touch the small ultra hot voluptuous caramel beauty. He just called her 'whore' and 'bitch,' a couple dozen times, and ordered her to leave his house, in less than eloquent terms. The neighbor that had taken-in Black, later found the piece of ear on Jerome's floor, after Jerome went back to work. The neighbor wrapped it up in a piece of wet toilet paper, and gave it to the ambulance crew. Liz pulled on a bathrobe and climbed in her car, to drive to her mother's house. Women secretly or not so secretly love violence, when its two men fighting, over them. Jerome just spit on the sidewalk and drove back to work. Black hadn't told anyone, about who'd actually given him the beating, so no charges were filed against Jerome. The cops were brought into the ER, but Black just told them, someone had jumped him in the dark, and he didn't get a look at them. Most likely, the only reason the cops came to the ER was to better determine when Black would be fit to return to work

as an informant. Black never revealed that it was Jerome, who'd attacked him, since he didn't want to risk another beating. Had the cops arrested Jerome, after a couple of hours, he'd have been out on bail, and he might have come to the hospital to give Black a second, perhaps fatal, beating. Jerome was just too slow to resist his anger. Few things are more satiating than revenge, served up hard and cold, and from a safe distance!

Liz went back to live with her mother, but only for two days. She and her renown sex drive, then went down to the paper one night, and in front of everyone, she begged Jerome to take her back, making reference to Jerome's impressive reproductive apparatus. Everyone at the paper, talked about the unusual seen she'd made. She then moved back in with the coal black 260 pound ICBM. Women do love sex and fireworks!

Tony's aunt later spoke with Liz, who told her that when Jerome stormed-in, he was carrying the tire iron. To this day, I would pay good money to see the expression on Black's face, that night. Luckily, Jerome didn't hit Black in the head with the tire iron. He only hit him everywhere else. The reattached piece of ear, got infected, and finally had to be

removed. The doc just trimmed the ragged edge straight. Only about the lower half of the ear remained, so if Black ever needed to wear glasses, they have been lopsided. My former dealer Black, and the aforementioned old guy, Max the Channel swimmer, at Ocean City, are the only two people I've known, who were missing part of an ear.

Of course, I never told my wife about Black or Jerome, since as bright as she was, she might have deduced my drug dealing. At times, Margo could be scary smart, and had the wherewithal to do great things, yet she would indulge in the most boring things, like smoking too much weed, redundantly playing simple boring church music on the piano, and looking at antiques and old fashioned houses. She was a woman with a high IQ, who lacked the corresponding motivation... too much weed can do that. Then again, there's nothing wrong with living a normal life, if that makes you happy, but I don't think she too happy with her life .

A few days later, I packed up and left my wife, my family, the paperboys, my friends, and the United States of America. Being a military brat, moving is what I was accustomed to. The morning of the day I left, I didn't really have a plan to leave; in fact, I

didn't know I was leaving, until right before I did. On an unplanned whim that morning, I had gone to a bookstore at the local Moldova shopping mall, and purchased an extra large road atlas, simply because I love looking at maps. Perchance, it has something about knowing my place on the earth, the distances and directions to other places, and the size and shape of the land masses. Besides, every piece of history you hear about, seems to relate to some location on a map. Obviously, my Dad had been big on geography, and frequently shown me maps, when I was a small child. Sitting in the mall's parking lot, I began to thumb through the pages of the US road atlas, and marveled at the fact that I only needed to make one turn, from one highway to another, to travel all the way down deep into Mexico; just take I-10 to San Antonio, and make a left onto highway 35 to the border town of Laredo, and once highway 35 crossed the border, it simply changed its number to 85, and continued on south, roughly one hundred eighty miles, to the city of Monterey, Mexico. For some reason, the fact there was only one turn in the entire trip fascinated me, and it seemed to be calling me. And there were a few things pushing me, as well: the cops watching me, a wife who only wanted to smoke weed and have a kid, a job that would have been too

hard for ten people, living in the unwashed cultural armpit of America and the home of the *KKK*, etc.

The idea of just driving and making only one little turn, and being the hell out of Mobile, and into a completely different country, was extremely alluring. A long drive, with one left-hand turn to completely change my life, so before I knew it, I was digging-up my mason jars. That morning, I gave the unsold dope to one of my dealers, the aforementioned beautiful black lesbian. She and her girlfriend were uncharacteristically appreciative, and I was ever so grateful! The girlfriend was the fairest of blonds, with long extremely thick platinum blond hair and sky blue eyes, and the contrast between the two women was wonderfully erotic! They were my first.

Back at home, my wife wasn't there, so I grabbed my clothes, stuffed them in a little blue cloth suitcase, threw it onto the car's backseat, scribbled a nice note for Margo, telling her how wonderful and beautiful she was, which was the truth, and that I had somewhat lost my mind, and needed a change. I left the note on the piano bench. Margo just wanted a life, with the blessing of children, and in my foolish way of thinking, that was a deal breaker. Years later,

I now realize how magnificent having a child can be. Perchance, I should have listened to Margo, but even now, I don't think so.

Before the sun was directly overhead that day, I was driving west on interstate ten, with hardly any sleep, yet feeling invigorated; happy to be free of oppressive Mobile, but for that matter, the city was free of the likes of me. My wife loved that old southern town; but then, it was her home. To my way of thinking, she was a living contradiction, for she was a hippie at heart, but she dearly loved the old South, overlooking its' marked racism, oppressive religion, and it's poor education. While I too had been born in Mobile, it was far from feeling like home, and if 'home is where the heart is,' my heart yearned to be elsewhere.

With my drug money, a few clothes, a couple of mason jars, the rusty hand trowel, the old backpack, my new road atlas, the recent memories of the beautiful lesbians, and riding in my three speed on the column, six cylinder, *Ford Maverick*, I drove directly west, keeping the needle between 75 and 85 mph, while periodically glancing at the temperature gauge, and watching out for the police. I'd gotten rid of the can of solvents. For the first half of the trip, I

drove with the window down, letting the air wash over me.

It seems odd, that when you ask a person why they were divorced, they generally have one or two major reasons, but rarely if ever, do they mention boredom, yet I am certain many marriages must be fairly monotonous. At least, they look that way to me. Perhaps, people just fear change (divorce), when change is what might make them happy. While Margo was a wonderful, beautiful, and highly intelligent wife, I only married her to make her, and her old-fashioned parents, happy. And yes, I realize that makes me sound dull-witted, and periodically I've earned that descriptor. Agreeing to marry Margo was not too different from the day I allowed Shades to get in my car. Marrying her, had all started innocently enough. Her folks were devout Southern Baptists, and Margo had been 'living in sin,' out of wedlock with me. Such a thing was something of a 'big deal,' in the early seventies. One afternoon, Margo and I were out for a drive. I'd briefly stopped the car for a stop sign, and Margo unexpectedly began to cry and sob. The stop sign should have clued me in. When I asked her why she was crying, she mentioned that she had gotten a call from her

mom, and had been told that her parents had officially excommunicated her, refusing to speak with her ever again, since she was living in sin with me. That news appeared to have crushed Margo. After the phone call, almost hourly, she would cry and claim that the excommunication was unbearable. She'd periodically lock herself in the bathroom to loudly cry. Yet prior to that excommunication, she'd hardly spoken with them. Besides, she absolutely loathed talking with her mother. So, the idea of her parents not talking to her may have been a strategic contrivance; perhaps, something which she or her mother had ginned-up to make me see the light, and propose marriage, for indeed after the marriage, Margo went back to rarely speaking with them. Never did I tell Margo that I suspected her deceit, for when someone tricks you, it's best to let them keep their illusion of success, as long as you can escape further trickery. She was a lovely brilliant girl, in all other ways.

I was a fool for having married for the wrong reason, or more accurately, for having married the wrong woman; yet as mentioned, the relationship helped me get over Evangeline, and for that alone, I shall be eternally grateful to Margo! After the

putative parental excommunication, I actually felt sorry for Margo, and wanted to give her peace of mind. She did truly love her hard working, honest, and amiable dad. So, to help her stay in communication with her father, I proposed marriage to her, if you can call it such. The marriage proposal went roughly as follows.

“Well, if your parents won’t speak with you, just cuz we’re not married, we’ll just go get married. You want to do that? The courthouse is cheap. It’s only a few dollars... fill-out a few forms... show some ID... problem solved. If you want, we can do that.”

She threw her arms around my neck and kissed me. The Justice of the Peace was only \$25, back then. But, once I told her that we’d get married, the next thing I knew, her mother had suddenly flown into Mobile from Houston, and started planning a huge expensive church wedding. Margo’s mom called my Mom, who then called me, and told me, that I should ask my dear Dad to be my best man, but while I absolutely wanted to ask him, I feared he’d refuse, owing to the rather obvious fact that I was far from the son he’d wanted. I truly felt that my Dad hated me, ever since I soaped the school windows in southern Spain, and he didn’t care to have much to

do with me. Nevertheless, I asked him to be my best man, and to my utter amazement, he seemed agreed and seemed pleased. Wisely, he refused to wear the clownish light blue tuxedo, which Margo's rural mother had selected for the males in the wedding party. Instead, Dad just wore a tasteful dark suite; the same one I'd give the undertaker to bury him when he died at age 92. The wedding ceremony was like being in someone else's dream. There's nothing like standing-up in front of a crowd of people in a church, most of whom I didn't know, doing something you don't believe in; especially, when you don't care for churches, and you're dressed like a clown. When I was getting dressed in my ridiculous looking tux, I was with my cousin Al, in one of the back rooms of the church. Al offered to drive me away from the wedding. He somehow knew that I didn't really want to be there. To this day, I admire Al for making the offer. Of all my cousins, Al had the toughest life. His folks were cruel to him, and so he turned-out to be a slightly cruel and sarcastic person, always looking to point-out other people's short comings.

As mentioned, after I left Mobile, Margo went on to marry twice more and to divorce both times. The

second husband gave her three girls, and the third fellow gave her a bad beating, with a brief stay in the hospital. Perchance now in her old age, she's lining-up her fourth husband, and if she is, I sincerely hope she finds a good one. Though I've had many relationships, I never married again, but just went for a various brief, as well as lengthy connections. I no longer need the government or some church to tell me what to do. Except for drug dealing, you generally don't have to tell me twice. Throughout my years, I've never understood the need for marriage. Maybe, that says something about me. Besides, no one ever did it for me quite like Evangeline. But, even with Evangeline, I never thought about the social contrivance of marriage, but just loved and enjoyed her. Like I said, it's hard to overshadow a dead girl's memory; especially since, Evangeline and I had made no bad memories. I suppose you could say, her dad was the only fly in the ointment. Nevertheless, he was a good man.

The most painful state of being is remembering the future, particularly the one you'll never have.

Soren Kierkegaard

Because of these painful memories, I've always been in love with my grief.

t's a Slam Dunk, by William O. Maudrey

Even if one finds his or her one-and-only, I've never understood the need to marry. To me, it just seems like an ancient tradition, which should have died along with books like *Malleus Maleficarum* (written by 1486 by Heinrich Kramer, a German Catholic priest), a ridiculous medieval sadistic imaginative text, which allowed the Christians to burn women as witches. Often, the book allowed the husband to have the church kill his wife, so that he could legitimately remarry, and probably someone younger, better looking, someone he coveted. How the ever selfish and self-perpetuating DNA plays into the mating ritual of humans can be more than slightly cumbersome, macabre, and at times downright dangerous, especially when you stir-in a big dollop of religion, and each religion loves a good ceremony.

Still, apparently for some people, marriage is truly satisfying, maybe even superb; after all,

marriage is supposed to be the idealized pairing/mating of people, religion, and culture. Even the government gets in on it with the license. But even if those happy people never got that paper certificate, never stood up in front of their religious leader or judge, and never paid for the license, and never spoke aloud their vows, I imagine they might still have been happy with each other. For too many, marriage later becomes an absolute nightmare, yet at the time those the couples went through the marriage ceremony, they hadn't a clue that divorce was remotely in the offing. This major misread happens to people, regardless of their intelligence., their religion, or their efforts. Even Einstein got divorced. His first marriage started with love letters, and ended with rumors that she thought he was an egomaniac, which despite all his wise sayings, he likely was. Seems to me, that if two people are meant to be together, they just stay together, and that is what a marriage really is, not a ceremony or a piece of paper, or words spoken by a priest, minister, rabbi, judge, or mullah, and certainly not a paid-for license. A marriage is simply the mutual love! But the good thing about not getting married is that, if the marriage goes south, as is frequently the case, the couple doesn't have to go through an unpleasant, and

costly divorce. While people generally consider divorce a tragedy, divorce attorneys financially thrive on it, as do the civil judges.

The marriage resides in the hearts and minds of the two people. If there's a God and he chooses to bless the marriage, then he'll do so, regardless of a ceremony, or what's scribbled on some license/certificate. If you want your God to bless the marriage, just ask that God for the blessing, and then it's up to your God. It's hard to imagine that the creator of the universe cares about your ceremony. The vast majority of the marriages, that have 'gone the distance,' seem to have sustained way too much battle damage for my taste. Maybe, I'm just not tough enough, or I lack the proper emotional development, or my moral wiring is all screwed-up; probably all three. With the exception of Evangeline, my relationships have all been initially exciting, then enjoyable, but eventually mundane, each lasting anywhere from a couple of months to several years. The shorter relationships also have fond memories. But even if Evangeline had never died, I still wouldn't see the need to marry her. She was too important to involve her in such an absurdity.

How often have you heard a husband or wife

say, “I only stayed for the children's sake?” Or, there’s that classic phase, “Oh yes, we’ve had our ups and downs.” Then there’s that classic comment, “Marriage is something that you have to work on.” Human beings are each so different, and aside from a few things like, oxygen, food, and water, what works for one person, may not for another.

Admittedly, I sincerely missed my wife, when I left her, yet I knew I’d made the right decision by leaving for Mexico. It was obvious where my future in Mobile was headed, so why wait for the inevitable? Why wait for misery? My life would have been: two or three kids, a small house, mortgage payments, taxes, insurance, a seventy hour work week, arguments, and inevitably old age with not enough retirement.

My marriage to Margo was based on a lie, probably contrived by her highly religious mom. Religious people can frequently lie more easily, if the lie serves their belief. If you’ve adopt a belief system, you’ve probably learned to lie to yourself. Another reason my marriage was a lie is because Margo wasn’t really Margo. Margo smoked more kush, than I certainly cared to. If she could have just grown it in the yard, it would have been one thing, but as it was,

it took a chunk out of my paycheck, ergo it was one of the driving factors in my getting into the drug dealing game. Many times, I just pretended that I was hitting the joint, and then I'd pretend I was baked. After all, you can only get so stoned, and isn't there something to be said for the normal biochemistry of consciousness? Clearly, I grew tired of being senseless. Some people claim that on weed they can think, create, and study better; not me. Weed just made me enjoy sex, music, and food more, a lot more, but only to imagine that I was more creative, when in fact, I was less creative on weed.

Ninety-nine percent of the time, that claim of increased cognitive ability on weed is bullshit, an excuse to get stoned. I was barely smart enough to qualify as a moron, when loaded. People usually think their thoughts are profound on weed, only to appear rather elementary or ridiculous, in the light of sober analysis. When stoned with a group of 'creative' people, I'd often write down our supposed 'profound' thoughts. Later, when clear-headed, I read them, and a few of those ideas were, at best, mildly interesting. Perchance the only exceptions to this, may apply to the creativity of musicians, and painters. I do feel that many of those artists are

indeed more creative on weed, so perhaps the right hemisphere is better designed for weed; not so much the logical left half of the brain.

As mentioned, sex, music, and food are great on weed, but for most people their stoned IQ is going round and round in the porcelain throne. Weed also seriously dampens most people's motivation. Sure, they may feel they are motivated, but actual accomplishments generally don't substantiate that as fact. It did make me feel more speculative, but less able to successfully sort things out. While a very small percentage of smokers accomplish things on weed, the vast majority of regular ganja smokers accomplish relatively little, barring the aforementioned artists. Still for many, kush is the preverbal logical response to an illogical cruel world. No one can justify smoking weed, quite like a pothead! The psychological addiction to pot occurs in about one percent of the people, who smoke it, and such people, when not stoned, are ill-tempered, overly opinionated, and overly aggressive. It seems that the weed allows them to be more acceptable, more tolerable to others. These people, without weed, tend to alienate their friends and family. Because weed has this beneficial effect on them, they can't

understand why others don't want to indulge.

Maybe that's why chronic weed smokers tend to only hangout with other weed smokers, as if the rest of the planet's inhabitants are incapable of being interesting. If you're a weed smoker, I'm sure you're already trying to refute what I've just said, but somewhere deep down inside your THC-soaked gray mush, you know I'm on track. Of course, the same is largely true of boozers, crack smokers, heroin users, acid heads, adrenaline junkies, gamblers, etc. This also applies to people's political affiliations, sports preferences, sexual proclivities, literary interests, etc. Many people only look for people, whose gray matter makes sense to them, and that means that there are similar cognitive abilities, beliefs, emotions, perceptions, habits, fears, opinions, dreams or lack of dreams... similar circuits, etc.... mush in search of similar mush! The reality of circuits being confirmed by other circuits. One guy who went in search of people, who weren't like himself, was Jesus; after all, he was a pious fellow, who hung-out with a hooker, but didn't have sex... but all the witnesses are long gone and the written record is more than sketchy. Still, Jesus wanted everyone to see things his way, his circuits, that is provided that his brain was a

human brain. The actual bible was made by a bunch of guys sorting-through thousands of old scrolls, which various of them had brought to a meeting in a small town in Turkey, and there, they hand picked the ones that they felt were holy. Most of the scrolls were rejected for various human reasons, and they were all written by men. The men decided to call their collection of little scrolls, 'biblica' (bible). So of course, the Bible has to be the word of God. Right?

But regardless of all this criticism about weed, the stuff definitely needs to be legalized. Its down right immoral that the police lock people up for sale or possession of marijuana; yet almost every cop I've ever known loves alcohol, and alcohol is definitely a dangerous and highly addicting drug, capable of creating increased aggression and physical withdrawals. If we're gonna lock-up people for weed, we might as well lock-up all the coffee drinkers and tobacco smokers, as well; after all, those are also addicting mind-altering drugs. If tobacco and alcohol aren't addicting, and marijuana is, then iguanas live on the South Pole. And if you really feel the urge to control people, lets arrest people, who eat unhealthy fast foods, especially fried food, pastries, and candies. The Mormons criticize caffeine users, yet they may

consume huge amounts of processed sugar. What would the world do without, its various holy scriptures, scrolls, tablets, prophets, Gods, etc.? Strange as it may seem, there might be a lot less chaos. Maybe it all hinges on whether you believe that the majority of human beings are inherently good or evil.

Fatty foods, particularly fried foods, and sweets may be the main cause of coronary heart disease, diabetes, obesity, arthritis, etc. Certainly, there are genetic factors involved, but diet is more-often-than-not paramount. And remember that if we lock-up people for dietary reasons, the prisoners become more healthy, but that's provided we don't feed them the current prison menus. Now there's a thought, what if prisoners were only fed a vegan diet? After all, meat, eggs, and cheese are costly and less healthy. Besides, the more people we lock-up, the more money the local governments make, so why not lock-up people for their dietary habits? As things are going, that could be next. After all, we want those prison corporations to flourish! Don't we? While we're at it, instead of putting weight lifting equipment in prison why not have yoga classes, and a track. Powerlifting not only increases muscle

power, but the size of the adrenal glands, and both of these increase one's propensity for violence.

It's hard to find anything bad about weed, other than it's a huge waste of time, and most people are dumber and under motivated when on it. It causes no disease, and is nonaddicting for ninety-nine percent of those who smoke it. Here's a potent fact... wasn't it a weed smoker, who won the greatest number of gold medals in the entire history of the Olympics... Michael Phelps? And, plenty of brilliant people admit to having smoked weed. Most of the successful everyday users are musicians or people in the entrainment industry, as mentioned, the right hemisphere folks.

It is absolutely ridiculous that users or sellers of weed are put in jail, when alcohol, tobacco, and unhealthy foods are so highly addicting and far more destructive. Moreover, those products are sold, practically everywhere. When it comes to physiological damage and psychological misery, a good analogy might be, kush is to alcohol and tobacco, as a paintball gun is to a 12 gauge double-barreled shotgun and a hand grenade. Maybe that's why about twenty-five percent of the states have, at long long last, legalized green buddha for medical

use, and two states (four percent) have legalized it for casual use. Most likely, more states will soon follow, especially since they've finally worked out a way to license and charge the growers, license and charge the vendors, and tax the sales; after all, few people love money more than greedy government officials. In 2009, the federal excise on cigarettes grossed roughly \$8.5 B, and the combined states taxes in gross cigarette excise tax was about \$15.7 billion! The state and federal figures for alcohol were around the same, that year! Together (alcohol and tobacco) just the taxes on them ran roughly \$31 billion. If the states can make more money off of legalizing green buddha, than from locking people-up for green buddha, that's all they care about. The government does care about the people; they just care about making money. What would it be like to have a moral government?

While, I feel that weed should be legal and not taxable, I do think that almost any form of burned smoke can cause cancer, due to the high content of free radicals, and the fact that those 'dangling' covalent bonds can wreak havoc on human DNA. So the more prudent marijuana user might just bake brownies, or consume various edibles (gummies),

rather than burn and inhale the cancer-causing smoke. In my day, I preferred to simply eat hash. It contains more THC, has less contaminants, and in my subjective assessment is a truly great high, much better than smoking weed, and again it's nonaddicting. For me, hash was a highly pleasant stone, but as with weed, being stoned on hash wasn't good, if you needed to accomplish things. It was similar to opium in effect, yet not addicting.

Quite possibly the United States might actually be better off, if weed was legitimate, and beef, GMO vegetables, fried foods, and anything made with white processed sugar, were made illegal. Now, millions of Americans are suffering with obesity, diabetes, degenerative joints, arthritis, clogged arteries, and all the various other medical ills, which accompany those serious disorders.

If kush were legal for casual use, the Mexican marijuana cartels would be put out of business practically overnight, without anyone having to fire a shot, and Lord knows, that those cartels do like to fire more than a few shots. Murder has passed soccer for the national sport in northern Mexico. The amount of unnecessary killing, and heinous torture just south of our border, over stupid illegal weed

sales, has become legendary. It seems like every week, I hear of some new sadistic torture and murder being committed by the cartels. Water-boarding is nothing compared to the methods the Mexican cartels use: face peeling (removal), chainsaw beheadings and amputations, acid baths, being boiled alive, being fed to lions and tigers, etc. Whatever spins the sadists' bennies.

The federal government could resolve a huge chunk of the cartel problem by merely legalizing weed. Just allow the weed smokers to grow it in their homes or yards. What's the big deal? Is it better to allow these murders to continue? The major stumbling blocks are: the GOP, and the state governments trying to figure-out how to make money off the legalization: taxing the sale of the product, licensing (charging and controlling) the growers, and taxing and licensing the stores/dispensaries, etc. Why does the government have to make money off virtually everything? Could it be that politicians are greedy, and don't care about all these cartel killings, and stupid arrests? Why can't we just let the marijuana smokers, grow their own, and allow all the related cartel crime to stop? Just let people grow what they want, and stop all the insanity which

illegal weed now produces! Even in those states where marijuana has been approved for casual use, they still have countless government regulations and restrictions. They sure don't want people growing heir own! Why? The answer is simply money. All those stupid marijuana arrests and the subsequent prosecutorial and punitive issues are ridiculous, and cost you, the taxpayer. In a PEW research poll, roughly 69 percent of Americans feel that alcohol is more damaging than weed; all that poll shows is that 31 percent of America is still in the dark.

<http://www.pewresearch.org/fact-tank/2015/04/14/6-facts-about-marijuana/>

As mentioned, for about one percent of the people, who smoke weed, it is apparently psychologically addictive. In my limited subjective observations, weed does help people, who tend to suffer with things like: anger management problems, depression, *BPD*, and *PTSD*. They seem to clinically benefit from smoking weed. The herb appears to ameliorate their natural tendency to be rude or overly aggressive, or it alleviates their depression, and in others, it attenuates the stress related to their

PTSD. Weed is also good for pain relief, and for some people, it helps with insomnia, but not me. For some children with epilepsy, marijuana appears to be effective. If a person is in chronic pain, and there are folks who cannot escape pain, they can reduce their narcotic use by using weed! Is that a bad idea?

Margo and her parents were strict Southern Baptists, my Mom is a devout Presbyterian, and all my friends are fairly vocal about what they believe or what they don't believe. On the other hand, my Dad passed away, never leaving me with a single clue as to what he actually thought about the big questions. If I had to guess. I'd say my Dad thought it was just too big a question for the human specie, and at times he was probably shocked, and at other times amused, by everyone's insistence, concerning their individual beliefs; nevertheless, he respected each person's right to choose their belief. I don't know what I believe, but I find myself thinking that the TV entertainer, Bill Maher, makes good sense, and he's funny, but I still like the idea of there being a creator, and the idea of there being a heaven isn't too bad either; but, in my case it's probably just wishful thinking. The fact that time and the universe are infinite kind of make me think there might be a

creator/god, but I seriously doubt that the religious text remotely represent that god.

Throughout these years, I have known both brilliant believers and non-believers, kind atheists and caring believers. Moreover, I've also known the reverse of those things to be true. Who honestly knows? Most of you readers very likely assume that you've got the answers. Every Muslim, Christian, Buddhist, Hindu, Atheist, Jew, etc., 'knows,' without the slightest doubt, that their belief is the correct belief, and that the rest of the world is completely, or mostly, missing the boat. Each person possesses three pounds of gray mush, which has acquired the requisite amount of information/programing/memories (neurocircuits), so that their ego and identify is satisfied that they indeed possess 'the true answer' to the big question. On the other hand, could it be that all beliefs are right or at least somewhat right? That everyone is somewhat right, but that no one is completely right? Could the concept be so large, that it incorporates all 'the answers,' which humans have managed to spew forth, since climbing out of the trees? Perhaps, it may be as if each person only has one piece of a billion piece jigsaw puzzle. Each person's three pounds of gray mush is correct,

but it's only a tiny part of the truth. Maybe we were smarter, when we were still up among the branches, because at least back then, we weren't destroying the planet, nor were we fretting over unanswerable questions. In 2005, scientists sequenced the genome (nucleotide sequences) of chimps, and reported that humans share about 99 percent of their DNA with them, and so they're our closest living relative. The DNA of the bonobo ape is also highly similar (about 98 percent) to humans. Perhaps somewhere in the past, humans, bonobos, and chimpanzees may have a common ancestor. But one thing is certain that one or two percent difference is extremely important, and points toward certain critical DNA aspects of intellect.

Could everyone be partly right: the Atheist, the Buddhist, the Christian, the Muslim, the Hindu, the Jew, the Rastafarian, etc.? Some folks in all those various groups, are famous for killing and maiming each other, in the name of their belief, their truth? Let's face it, it's pretty unlikely that someone is going to believe something that doesn't have at least a modicum of truth.

Imprudent folks may believe that if someone is

willing to valiantly fight and die a hero's death for a particular belief, it must be true.

The Need to Believe by Mortimer A.

Williams

Maybe the world's various believers are somewhat like the seven blind men and the elephant. {This story is a modification of the story of the six blind men and the elephant, which is apparently of uncertain authorship, but has been alleged to have come from somewhere in the Indian subcontinent, a very long time ago.}

One at a time, each of the seven blind men were lead through a room, where there stood only a dreaming elephant. They were allowed to reach out for a couple seconds, then each of them were escorted out of the room. Later, each sightless man was asked what he thought had been in the room. One blind man said that he was certain that a large powerful python was in the room, and for a moment he had in fact touched the elephant's thick muscular trunk. A second guy claimed a spear was in the room, and of course he had bumped into the tip of one of

the animal's ivory tusks. A third blind fellow proclaimed that a thick tree stood in the room, and he had briefly felt one of the elephant's thick forelegs. The fourth blind chap said a rather strange wall was in the room, and he'd touched the elephant's side. The fifth unsighted bloke said there was no doubt that a large leaf was in the room, for his fingertips had been brushed by one of the elephant's ears. The sixth sightless gent had been flicked by the creature's tail and loudly claimed there was a hair-tipped whip in the room. The seventh blind man walked through the room unassisted and didn't encounter the elephant, hence he reported that nothing was in the room.

As mentioned, I heard the story somewhere, when it included only six blind men; I only added the guy, who missed the elephant. The seven sightless gentlemen had each stated what they fully 'believed' was the absolute truth; none of them had lied, yet each one was positive, that he was correct in his assessment. And to some degree, each man was indeed truthful. Moreover, each blindman 'knew' that the other six men were liars, or simply mistaken!

Still, what each blind man had failed to realize were the limits of his own perceptions, and that his

conclusions were extremely limited, since they were blind, and were only allowed a few seconds in the room. The world is now filled with the blind, all arguing about what's in the room. Once a mind accepts a belief or disbelief, innumerable things then seem to continually confirm their position, or disbelief... memories already stored in the hippocampus, begin to connect with the neurons, which form that belief, or that lack of belief.

As a result, the individual's belief (Christianity, Islam, Buddhism, Atheism, Hinduism, Judaism, etc.) becomes stronger the longer it's held, because the more memories (neurons) manage to integrate (new synapses) with said memory circuits, the harder it becomes to dispel that larger neurological collection (the belief, the many circuits). Hence, people raised in a certain religion are less apt to change. This phenomenon may exist, because some questions are too big for three pounds of gray matter to accurately process. Perchance, the real truth is that it only matters what the elephant dreams, or if the elephant has a sense of humor.

All the parts of the elephant were able to live in harmony, in a philosophical/biochemical homeostasis, unlike the world's warring beliefs.

Understanding creation and the universe may just be beyond the grasp of any fragile jelly-like three pounds of gray mush, which basically accounts for all of you. While evolution easily explains many things about life, and in my feeble mind, there is no doubt the theory of evolution is largely true, not a mere theory, but what can't be explained by science is where all the matter and/or energy came from, in the first place. And then, how do you come-up with a decent understanding of the idea of it all 'beginning.' There was probably a big bang, but where did all that exploding matter come from, and just how many big bangs have there been? Infinity is not something to be well defined, and not to be bracketed by jiggly gray mush. Every religious text ever penned does a ridiculous job of trying to explain these things. If there's a God, which there very well might be, he did a bad job of writing or inspiring his supposed textbook (which ever one you prefer), but no book seems worthy of an entity which could create it all; hence, the elephant's dreams are more than curious.

Various religious folks say God did it all. Others admit they don't know where all the crap came from, but that because they don't know where it all came from, doesn't mean there is a God, and certainly not

one as described by the various religions. Of course, the various God believing groups threaten other God groups, as well as the non-believers with fire and brimstone, or even with bullets, bombs, cruise missiles, swords, etc., while simultaneously, they try to seduce converts by dangling the eternally pleasant, no death, carrot, called: paradise, Elysium, nirvana, Valhalla, heaven, Zion, Arcadia, etc.

The non-believers accuse the believers of being ignorant and ignoring the discoveries and advancements of science, and while that's somewhat true, who really knows the answers, ergo just how important is knowledge? Why don't we all just give those questions a rest, and let everyone believe what they want, but leave others to their own fancy, as long as they don't get too pushy! Wouldn't it be nice to simply get along? Personally, I could care less about your belief, as long as you don't impose it on me, and that you behave in a fair and kindly fashion, but obviously not all religions are tolerant, and even use demeaning names for people, who don't believe in their Holy text, or their interpretation of some text. Obviously, that's why religions shouldn't be involved in government.

All that unexplainable matter (Ryttov particles,

Higgs boson, neutrino, photons, protons, atoms, molecules, rocks, planets, stars, singularities, clusters of galaxies, a string, a point, etc.) certainly has to make one wonder where it all came from. Not to mention, the fact there is a clear, but as yet poorly understood, organization (laws of physics) of said particles. Of course, said organization may, to a large extent, just be a product of how our neurology allows us to perceive things. There's a better than even chance that's the case. What else could it be?

The Christian likes to say that not being able to prove God's existence is where faith comes in, but how is that different from brain washing... something to attenuate the fear of death and to have a little something to look forward to... hope... something to explain our purpose or value in this incomprehensible universe. Without active gray matter, there is no faith, so perchance faith is but another arrangement of neurons, ergo different for each person. Either way, humans seem to be missing critical pieces of the puzzle. Some people don't mind that the pieces are missing, others can't stand the fact. Certain humans, especially ones like my dear Mom, can become true masters of self deceit. Regardless, if there is a God, the words in the various

religious texts probably don't remotely due a deity justice. If there is a God, that created the entire universe, made everything from nothing, like making gumbo from sand, it's hard to imagine, that mere words can adequately describe such a gifted being. Moreover, none of the religious texts have any appreciable explanation about creation, or the nature of life. As a scientist, the words in all the holy books, patently fall short of explaining the universe and life, as well as an entity which could created it all. Moreover, it would be a real stretch of the imagination to assume that said holy texts are the work of the creator of the universe. Honestly, they're a bit of an insult to the creator. At best, those texts just seem like lots of good and wise words, created by relatively intelligent people; some well intended, others not so much. One of the below two quotes comes from the koran and the other the bible. I suppose they're supposed to be good words to live by and worthy of being inspired by the creator. Do they seem slightly similar? And if so, who's the terrorist?

Now go and strike the Infidel and devote to destruction all that they have. Do not spare them, but kill both man and woman, child and infant, ox and

sheep, camel and donkey.

Surah 27: 63

Now go and strike Amalek (enemy of the Israelites) and devote to destruction all that they have. Do not spare them, but kill both man and woman, child and infant, ox and sheep, camel and donkey.

First Samuel 15:3

Maybe what gives birth to faith and/or belief is when the believer, prays ten thousand times, or hits a crisis in their life, or listens to countless sermons, or knows or thinks it time to die, or reads the chosen holy text frequently enough that it literally seems to 'come alive,' and they have enough redundant circuits that it begins to look like it answers all the big questions, or maybe their born into a religion. The ideas in the holy book start matching-up with other memories in their hippocampi. Once, when I was reading the description of a pond and the surrounding vegetation, I had to stop reading, because the vision those descriptive words had created literally blocked-out my ability to see the words. After enough neurons become entangled with

the redundant religious readings, and teachings, then everything, which comes rumbling into the believer's brain, begins to match up with the countless neurons associated with those representing the holy book; and so... bingo!... Neurophysiological faith is born, and that person then screams, "I believe, hallelujah!" And in truth, they do believe.

While I readily acknowledge that there could be a grand creator, I can't buy the concept that he'd make someone burn forever, just because they can't manage to believe in him and his kid. Especially if the burning individual/soul had lived a good life. Such horrible deeds (burning billions of souls forever) seem inherently evil, and in my meager three pounds of gray mush such torturous deeds, as burning souls forever, make God look a tad small minded, if not downright sadistically evil. I also have had a hard time with the walled city of heaven and the streets of gold. Really... walls and gold? That sounds a bit like the current presidential candidate, Donald Trump... walls and gold... a rich guy running on the idea of building a big wall. He seems bright enough, but undereducated.

The few papyrus scrolls, which compiled the bible, were selected from a great pile of thousands of

scrolls, by an ancient Roman emperor and a handful of early Christian leaders. They had been scribbled a long time ago, when warring tribal peoples thought it was nice to have a wall around the city for protection, and when the idea of streets made of gold, as silly as that is, appealed to the poor, and probably still does to people on the left half of the bell curve. On the other hand, you might want to say, it was probably the best description that could be made by the residents of earth, hundreds of years ago. Not something written or inspired by the grand creator of the entire universe.

Bill Maher and Jerry Falwell are both certain they're right, both seem like nice highly intelligent guys. Each knows the other is completely full of crap. But, just maybe the question, like the elephant and infinity, is far too large, for the Einsteinium brains of Bill Maher and Jerry Falwell. Bill's comedy is so well crafted and delivered, that it seems to possess an earnest, if not at times, genius inspiration, and Jerry's preaching has the same qualities, but it's a little ham-handed, and melodramatic. Both are good for a laugh, and believe they're delivering a seriously truthful message. Both men seem honest in what they profess, and I'm sure each of them believes the other

to be ridiculous, or ill informed, or simply wrong. They each stand on the opposite end of the belief spectrum, but both are honest moral men.

Due to repressed sexual urges, Jerry probably has more perverted thoughts, which he struggles hard to control; whereas, Bill openly discusses perversions, so he's probably more conventional. Bill probably possesses more forgiveness and good will, than does Jerry. Jerry wants to save people's eternal souls, but he's more apt to judge harshly. While he'll tell you, that Jesus forgives you, I'm not so sure that Jerry does. Jerry's less than kind behavior may be brought on by people, who rudely challenge his beliefs. The same goes for Bill, people who challenge his beliefs, become his targets.

Each of us has only our own pitiful little three pounds of gray matter, with which to solve those mammoth eternal conundrums. A couple of rough analogies might be an ant considering the construction of the space shuttle, or a grasshopper eating different color berries and managing to paint the Mona Lisa. A friend of mine, named Russ, was the world's greatest natural born comedian. The night that he overdosed, he first came to me at the gym, were we worked-out, telling me that he'd really

“fucked-up,” and had fallen off the wagon, and was doing all kinds of illegal pills. Most likely, it was a plea for help, and stupid me, I didn’t do enough. All I did was to tell him to contact his NA sponsor. I should have made sure that he did, but I didn’t. Russ had even told me from whom he was getting the pills, and oddly enough said person attended his funeral, looking innocent and unaffected. Right before Russ left the gym that evening, to go home, to go to bed, and never wake-up again, he likened God and the Universe unto an ocean. Maybe Russ sensed his time was near. He said something, about two blind men.

“You know Joey, it’s like God or the Universe is an ocean, filled with countless types of plankton, millions of weird plants and animals, lots of underwater volcanoes, mountains, canyons and valleys, currents, tides, and millions of other unknown mysteries. Two blind men are standing on its shore. One blindman stoops down, scoops up and swallows a thimble full of the ocean water, and the other drinks a whole tea cup of the brine. Afterwards, each thinks he understands what the ocean is, and is happy to tell you about their vast knowledge.”

Down in the doggedly ultraconservative South, the local Baptists get many of their converts, by preaching the carrot and stick, heaven and hell. Believe and you're happy forever, hanging around with a lot of good people in a walled city, with gold streets. Don't believe and you burn forever, grinding your teeth, screaming, and cursing-up a storm, in a lake of fire. The neurons scream their painful cry, but never manage to burn away, so the pain never ceases. The Baptist missionaries say things like:

“God has such a wonderful place waiting for you, if you just believe.”

“If you don't believe, it's eternal damnation, with burning and pain forever. I'd hate for that to happen to you. So, you'd better get right with the Lord, and remember that he loves you.” Thusly, the true blue Baptist believer might convince the unbeliever. Honestly...?

Boy... that really explains things! In the mind of the southern Baptist, those two extremes, are 'real,' and the 'perfect' motivators. They wheel them both, as if a heaven is their gift to give, and hell is their weapon to terrify you. Presenting these two factors, gives them a feeling of power, with many Baptists enjoying welding the stick more than offering the

carrot. Its sort of like they've got a gun to your head, saying, "Tell me you love me, and I won't splatter your brains, but you'd better mean it! Do you believe me?"

You've got to love the Christian stick and carrot, and Islam is not too different. Those two religions are so persuasive. Right? How could you not love such propaganda? But if you screamed at the top of your lungs, that you believed that Jesus or Mohammed were son of God or Allah, does that really mean you actually believe? While heaven and hell, are the ultimate carrot and whip, you have to ask yourself what kind of mind invents such things... God? They both sound like something thought-up by wise, but illiterate old men, long ago.

For me, such a preposterous proposition (heaven and hell) is an insult to whatever/whoever created the universe. To say that the Creator of the Universe (Could there possibly be a more grandiose title?) might resort to such terror tactics seems sadly absurd, at least to my limited way of thinking. Is that really the best, God can manage... heaven and hell? Is that really Gods ultimate plan for all souls? Really? It does seem that heaven and hell might be something dreamed-up by a group of ancient

nomads, roaming around the sandy fertile crescent, trying to figure-out a way to control the murderous tribes, and there were many such tribes in the days of Jesus and Mohammed. To me, that heaven-hell concept seems ludicrous, yet brilliantly manipulative. A God who has the power to create everything from nothing, just decides to burn people forever, who don't appreciate him, including many good people, as well as people, who have never even heard of him. That means that all the people, who never got wind of christianity, go directly to hell and do not pass 'GO;' they just burn, forever and ever, pain without end, amen. Makes sense to me; how about you? Admittedly, the idea of burning forever is scary, if not terrifying, a sadistic and it's perverted, form of power. Often southern Christians wield that threat with a certain vehemence, as if it is they themselves are exercising God's power of eternal damnation. It's a bit like employing the rosary as a garrote, or using a holy book as a battle hammer. With all kinds of variations, religions, long before and after christianity, have possessed the concepts of heaven and hell. Christians aren't the original people with the heaven and hell idea. Hades was in Greek mythology. As you probably know, he was lord of the underworld.

When I was a young kid, I used to fantasize about God suddenly making an unexpected guest appearance, and doing a few big miracles to prove that he was real. And while you might think that childishly naive, that is supposedly what occurred in the bible, so after being taught that, I used to imagine that he'd give me a convincing demonstration. Why not?

<https://www.biblestudytools.com/topical-verses/bible-verses-about-miracles/>

“Okay Joey, for the next hour you will be able to fly, just like Superman, then you’ll believe that I’m God almighty, and that I exist, and if you obey your parents, I might allow you fly around for a whole week. Additionally, you’ll never need to sleep anymore. You’ll never run low on energy, and you’ll never die.” God states. *Thanks God! Wonder if people sleep in heaven. Why would they?*

“Okay Joey, if you snap your fingers, you’ll be completely invisible. So, take your clothes off, that way no one will be able to see you. Just snap your fingers again and you’ll reappear, but make sure that

you have your clothes on, first. Try to stay out of the girl's bathrooms and locker-rooms. Of course, if you can't help yourself, just drop-by your local Catholic confessional and I'll forgive you, but you've still got to tell the priest what you did. But don't worry, because he won't know who your are, since you'll be invisible, and don't try to trick him, and tell him that you're me." God might comment.

"Joey, how would you like to control the weather?" God might ask.

"How would you like a real time machine, Joey? You can go back and checkout the dinosaurs, and watch me, when I first made the entire universe. You know I did it all in seven days, before there was even a day, because the earth wasn't rotating, yet." God might suggest.

"God, that time machine is the something else! Seeing those amazing dinosaurs really blew me away... better than the Jurassic Park movie. Getting to see the progression of evolution, the parting of the Red Sea, and watching the bloody Crusades, and all those other bloody wars was really super; especially Hiroshima. What a bang! Meeting Aristotle, Cleopatra, Jesus, Mohammed, Buddha, Napoleon, Marie Antoinette, Gandhi, Michelangelo, Helen of

Troy, Leonardo De Vinci, Einstein, Oppenheimer, and Winston Churchill was way over the top. And, I loved sitting in the Roman Colosseum watching the Gladiators fight. Thanks for giving me the opportunity to meet Thomas Jefferson and James Madison to persuade them to change the first amendment of the constitution, and giving-up on slavery. It was great getting to watch my Dad fly all those combat missions. The attack on Pearl Harbor was a real shocker. That D-day landing was awesome. So yes, you really do exist!" I might have heartily agreed.

Unfortunately, I don't think that such a Godly appearance is too likely. Still, all the Christians know Jesus, with many his various miracles, is coming back one day, but what's the hold-up? I know; mysterious ways, right? Certainly, if God made a major guest appearance, the atheist would be shocked. By the same token, I think the majority of the supposed believers might be devastated, due to all the years that they've used God's 'forgiveness,' as an excuse to continue sinning. The atheists would just be judged as being ignorant, but all the believers, who had used God as hope for an afterlife, while having failed to properly conduct their lives, just

might really be in for the biggest shock, regardless of the biblical loopholes.

There are several reasons why I have trouble buying into the existence of a God. This is not to say that I don't believe there could be a God, it just means those holy gods as portrayed in the various major religions (Christianity, Islam, Hindu, Judaism, etc.), don't make sense to my ignorant way of thinking. Maybe if I pray a few thousand times, I'll eventually see the light. Again, this is not to say that those religions aren't filled with wisdom, for they definitely are. Still, I am truly shocked that so many people have bought into those holy texts. Then again, lots of folks, even bright folks, worshipped people like: Hitler, Stalin, Mao, Pol Pot, George Bush Junior, etc. So, what does that tell you? Just look at how many highly intelligent Japanese firmly believed that the small man, they called emperor, was an actual god!

If you talk to your average southern Baptist, Gandhi is now suffering the flames of eternal damnation, burning forever, and he's screaming, and gnashing his teeth. Gandhi's skin and nerve endings just keep burning away and regenerating, so he can continue to suffer, *ad infinitum*. That really makes

good sense, doesn't it? Or, maybe God's lets the devil implant electrodes into Gandhi's brain to keep zapping his pain centers: the anterior cingulate and the parieto-insular cortex receive stimulation from lamina-I neurons, via a portion of the thalamus (VMpo). After the death of a non-believer, God keeps those goopy gray circuits intact, just so He can continue the never ending painful suffering. Hallelujah! Praise the Lord! Thank you, Jesus! God is such a loving God, as long as you love him! But if you don't...eternal suffering.

How well God must know those painful pieces of neurology! But of course, He made them to begin with; besides, he knows everything... literally everything! Does God, the creator of everything, the epitome of goodness, really need that much reassurance and respect, that if he fails to receive his daily dose of acclaim, he'll torture the (soul of the) ignorant person for all of eternity? The Hebrew word 'nephesh' translated as 'soul' in English language bibles refers to a living, breathing body. Such a cruel god seems far worse than Stalin. It's a good thing that parents don't operate under that methodology. Is God really that vengeful? What purpose could such cruelty serve, or am I just too foolish to ask? It's true

I am foolish, but if believing was all that important, I'd think God would do a better job of explaining his need for such cruelty.

In Mobile, the number of Baptist churches is barely seconded by the number of bars. Oxymoronically, each establishment firmly supports the other. The two institutions exist in something of a synergistic relationship. The church makes the sinner more fully realize his or her sins, with the threat of damnation and the corresponding guilt, so during the week days, the guilty sinner drinks to escape his fear and self-loathing, as well as an excuse to sin more. Alcohol definitely helps with the sinning. No doubt you have heard the old axiom, 'Gin will make you sin.' By Sunday, the sinners are suffering with their drinking-induced sins, and worried about going straight to hell, ergo remorsefully they return to the church to emerge cleansed, and ready to hit the bars, again.

Both establishments, the bars and the churches, pay homage to different pieces of gray goop. It's a near perfect neurochemical relationship, which has been endlessly replayed throughout history. Both the bars and the churches collect their participants' money; the bars by selling drinks, the religious

institutions by selling tickets to paradise. Perchance, the bars give more back to support the country and their community, since a liquor license cost plenty, and the taxes on liquor are through the roof. The corresponding DUIs bring in additional revenue, and unlike the churches, the bar owners pay income tax on their capital gains. The government likes to cover-up how much money goes into the legal system/ government as a result of the millions of DUIs each year, ergo they tend to report only on those DUIs which have a corresponding fatality. But even if there was only one million annually in the US, and your average DUI represents about \$10k in costs, that's \$10B, every year.

On the other hand, religious institutions are tax free, and are on a never-ending search for donations, so in a very real way, each church is a financial drain on its community. The church pastor, minister, priest, etc. often receives a tax free residence and car, paid for by and maintained by church funds. The exact amount of church donations is often only totaled-up by that church leader. Certainly, some churches give to the community, but more spiritually than financially. To economically survive, the church must take more than it gives, lest it be without

operational funds. Throughout the world's history, it would be tough to say which has caused the most damage, the world's religions (hate between religions), or all the world's bars (behavior of drunks, and the adverse health issues caused by alcohol).

The day I departed Mobile, I don't think anyone realized that I was leaving, except for perhaps one of my cousins, the one who had the gift of not judging me, and the two aforementioned lesbian drug dealers. I just wanted something more in life. *I guess things workout the way they're supposed to.* After five minutes of driving, I was on Interstate 10, and heading west. Several hours thereafter, I turned south on highway 35, and was headed toward the Texas border town of Laredo. I kept thinking about Dylan's highly acclaimed song, *Stuck Inside of Mobile with the Memphis Blues Again*, from his 1966, *Blonde on Blonde* album.

...Grandpa died last week and now he's buried in the rocks

But everybody still talks about how badly they were shocked

But me, I expected it to happen

I'd knew he'd lost control, when he built a fire on
main street

And shot it full of holes

Oh, Mama, can this really be the end

To be stuck inside of Mobile with the Memphis
blues again

Now the senator came down here showing
everyone his gun

Handing out free tickets to the wedding of his
son

An' me, I nearly got busted an' wouldn't it be my
luck

To get caught without a ticket and be discovered
beneath a truck

Oh, mama, can this really be the end to be stuck
inside of Mobile

With the Memphis blues again....

Late that evening, while still on the American
side of lazy little Laredo, I found an abandoned
dilapidated cinder-block gas station, just northeast
outside of town in a desert area. The roof of the

faded yellow structure, had caved-in, looking as if a meteor had nailed it, or perhaps, the old gas station had been hit by a Texas twister, or maybe the old roof trusses had just rotted and snapped. By the time I located the run-down station, the stars were out, and the moonlight was bright. It was probably somewhere between eleven and midnight. The location, I'd selected, was behind the old station, a piece of ground elevated high enough, that it wasn't apt to flood. Another even higher rise in the desert blocked the traffic's view from one direction, while the old ramshackle gas station obstructed highway drivers from seeing me digging from the opposite direction. There was nothing but vast stretches of barren Texas prairie, in the remaining directions.

Shielded from any type of human scrutiny, except for perhaps satellites, I put most of my money in a Mason jar, screwed the lid down tight, dug a hole using my old rusty hand trowel, and deposited the cash-filled jar into my new dirt-bank. Only five hundred dollars did I put in my pocket for my unplanned journey down into Mexico. At the time, I hadn't planned on staying in country, nearly as long as I did. Later, if people asked me how long I'd been in Mexico, I'd just lie and say two months.

My visit south of the border would last longer than anticipated, and I returned with greater wealth, than I'd left buried in that jar near the ramshackle gas station. That night, I was just going with the flow, escaping the humdrum of Mobile, Alabama. In the dark and digging the hole, with the help of the luminescent moon, I saw something tiny, mechanically moving on the gray moonlit ground. It caught my attention, because it pivoted. The scorpion, not two inches long, seemed to be dancing in the moonlight, arching stinger. *It's the guardian of my stash.* While the small creature had eight legs, two front legs had pinchers, not too different from a crab.

As if in some unusual attempt to communicate with me, the armor-plated nocturnal arachnid circled in one direction, hesitated, then robotically circled in the other. Its segmented severely curved little tail, with its venomous tiny stringer, was held high at the ready. The prehistoric creature looked determined, as if its' lonely little existence in at infinitely expansive dark landscape was the most important thing in the universe. Too often, life forms, especially human life forms, can be filled with undeserved amounts of self-importance.

DNA, and some strands of RNA, are the only

selfish molecules, which have ever been made! They can be so selfish that some of the more advanced products of DNA would rather kill the entire planet, than reduce their massive profit margins. At the lower end of the socio-economic spectrum, there exists an imperfect inverse correlation... the poorer the person, the more kids they tend to have. You can't get much more selfish than DNA, unless it's a God threatening to make you burn forever. *Wonder if the scorpion will be here, when I come back?*

Before leaving my buried stash, I positioned three large stones, each about six feet from the other, forming the corners of an equal lateral triangle, with the jar buried in the very center of them, then I made a small pile of stones about twenty feet, from where I buried the jar, as subterfuge, just in case someone might have been watching me. Hopefully, they might assume that the pile of stones was where I'd actually buried the jar. Lastly, I dug several shallow holes and inadequately filled them in, as additional subterfuge. I peed in two of those spots just incase they brought dogs to investigate. Thinking of the little scorpion and not wanting to be stung, I was extremely careful every time I picked-up and moved a stone. *Thank God for the bright moonlight!* With the money jar

safely deposited under a foot of packed dirt, I climbed back into my dependable old *Ford* and headed in search of Laredo's border crossing.

No car inspection or personal questions were required to pass into Mexico. I just handed-over my Alabama State driver's license. The Mexican border guard barely even glanced at it, looked at my face, then handed my license back to me, and with a quick nod from the guard, I let-out the clutch, while pressing down on the gas. Going into Mexico, I had no idea what was going to happen, nor did I honestly know why I was going there, other than I desperately needed a change. I'd made-up my mind, that if the aged *Ford* broke down, I'd just leave it, and continue hitch-hiking south, deeper into Mexico, but all things considered, the car did Henry proud. How I desperately wanted a change.

It had taken roughly twelve hours to drive to Laredo, from Mobile. Bone-tired, I then headed nearly straight south, toward Monterey, about 180 miles from the border. It had been barely past midnight, when I'd crossed into Mexico. Thankfully, in the black of night, the car successfully made it all the way across the merciless Sonora Desert, and inside the city limits of Monterey, before clouds of

steam began to bellow-out from under the hood, and so, I quickly pulled off the city street, and turned off the engine. It was just after three in the morning, and I'd been driving for about fifteen hours. *At least, I made it across that desert, and into this city, before she went belly-up.* I'd placed my bet on the table, spun the wheel, and the white marble was rotating in the opposite direction.

It was a long time, before I'd come back across the border. In Mexico, I be involved in more than one killing, make friends with the kingpins of the drug trade in Mexico City, sell copious amounts of drugs, OBJ date several interesting women, start and operate a profitable semi-legitimate very pleasant business in the resort town of Acapulco, and twice be very nearly locked-up in a smelly Mexican prison. Throughout all that, I was never bored; still after that, I would need to make yet another major change in my imprudent young life. It would be a few more years, till I found a respectable direction.

